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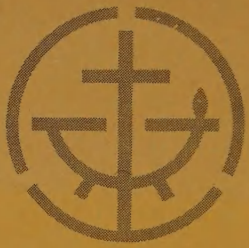

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Julia J Oberdorfer
Nov 11, 1935

A literary and religious event of great interest is the appearance of the new edition of **The Romance of the English Bible**, by Laura H. Wild. Just four hundred years ago, in October, 1935, "there arrived in London unbound sheets of a complete Bible, with a dedication to the King, and signed by 'his humbel subjecte and dayle oratour, Myles Coverdale.'" The printer and binder changed the title page to read "faithfully translated into English," whereas it had originally read "translated out of Dutch and Latin into English." Coverdale knew little Greek or Hebrew, so had depended chiefly upon Luther's German translation, and the Catholic Latin version. This became the famous Coverdale Bible, later approved by His Majesty the King, and widely received and read throughout England. Miss Wild's book is the complete story of all the English versions, from Wyclif on, but the new edition is especially interesting because of its appearance in this Coverdale anniversary year. It is called the Coverdale edition, and was formerly priced at $2.50, but Harpers have set the remarkably low price of $1.00 on the new edition. Miss Wild's style is delightful, and the whole book holds one from beginning to end. What a wonderful story is the Romance of the Bible! And this book has presented it to us in the most readable and interesting manner. It deserves a large sale.

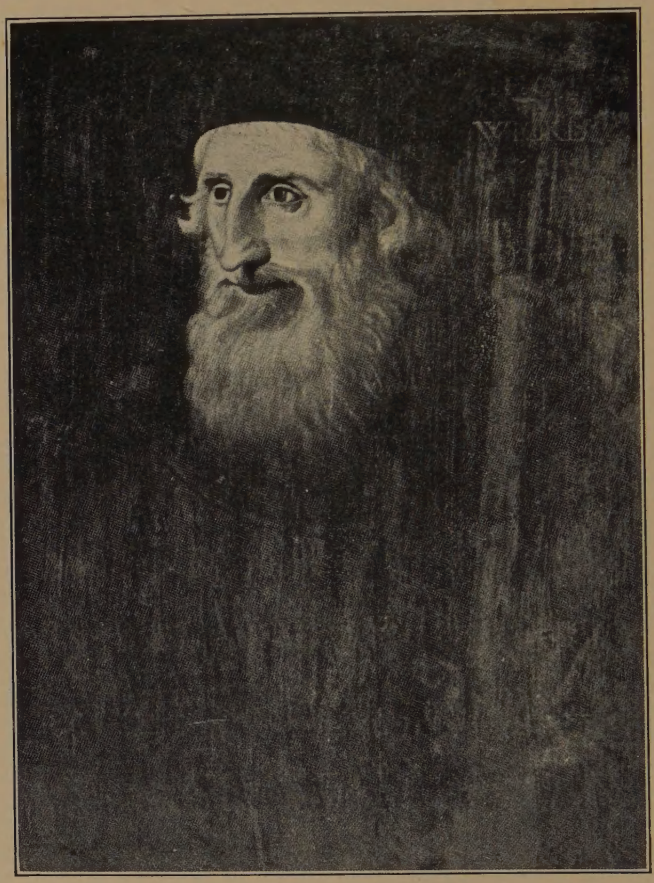
Not in a long time have I come across anything that surprised and delighted me so much as **The Sermon on the Mount**, by Rev. Emmet Fox, who is pastor of one of the largest churches in Baltimore. It would seem that the many, many volumes written about the Sermon on the Mount would well-nigh have said all that human tongue could say about it. Far from so! Dr. Fox has opened my eyes, and will, I feel sure, likewise open the eyes of every one who reads his book. The reason, I think, is that instead of telling what *he* thinks the various passages in the sermon mean, he has analyzed, with keen and analytically trained mind, every word, to ascertain exactly what *Christ* meant. The sub-title of the book, What Did Jesus Really Teach, is therefore completely justified.

An incredible number of difficult questions are answered in this remarkable little volume; Did Jesus approve of ritual? Did Adam and Eve ever actually exist? Is it really good to be meek? What clause in the Sermon is given twice, and why? Is divorce permissible to true Christians? These and hundreds of others are answered—not by Dr. Fox, but, as his acute analysis shows, by Jesus himself. And his inescapable conclusion is stated with overwhelming effect—the essence of the Sermon is that outward conformity, essential as it is, is no longer sufficient in itself, but that now, if we are to "come of age," spiritually, we have not merely to conform outwardly to outer rules, but that change in the inner man, too, is indispensable—a lesson the world seems in danger of forgetting. I hope you will not pass this book by; I have seen nothing like it. The price is $1.50, and the publishers are Harper & Bros.

From the Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, comes a beautiful volume entitled **Scenes from the Life of Jesus**, with illustrations by R. J. Norman. The frontispiece is a marvelous (*Continued on page 49*)

Books 151 (Coverdale)

THE ROMANCE OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE



JOHN WYCLIF
From painting in Lord Denbigh's collection

THE ROMANCE OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE

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A HISTORY OF THE TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE
INTO ENGLISH FROM WYCLIF TO
THE PRESENT DAY

BY

LAURA H. WILD

Author of
A LITERARY GUIDE
TO THE BIBLE

GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK
DOUBLEDAY, DORAN & COMPANY, INC.
1929

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FIRST EDITION

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INTRODUCTION

THE romance of the English Bible cannot be told by merely recounting its several translations. These are indicative of a spirit behind them, a spirit of the age in which each was produced. The translation of a book into another tongue than the original may be due merely to scholarly interest or it may be due to the need of a people for the message the book contains. Only scholars may know what that message is in the power of its original expression, but only men with their ears close to the ground to hear the restless murmurings of their own kith and kin can sense the need and bring the influence of a great book written in a foreign language to bear upon the life and thought of another people in a distant land under different circumstances in another cycle of the world's history.

That this has been done not only once, but repeatedly, for the English-speaking people shows two things, first the extraordinary power of the message of the Bible, and second, the transcendency of the creative spirit even in a translation. The inspiration vouchsafed the original prophetic

writers in Hebrew and Greek seems to descend now and again upon other minds to give them not only a sense of understanding for themselves but a sense of the need of their own day.

The history of the translations of the Bible into English is not therefore a mere tabulation of scholarly achievements; it is lifted up to another level, where the story of repeated outbursts of forceful creative production can be seen and told. Mere translation may be useful, but translation into the expression of one's time so that a message grips as if it were originally spoken in English is due to something more than the mere skillful handling of a scholar's tools. Behind it must be that *élan vital* that binds God and humanity together in an eternal bond.

To study, then, the romance of the English Bible is to study the personalities of the translators and the pulsating spirit of the ages in which they worked. Only so can we realize the marvellous power behind this book in its influence on English civilization. That civilization is not yet completed. It may be that the need of the biblical message is an ever-recurring need, to be satisfied by nothing save a rebirth of expression from time to time to fit the language of the day.

At any rate it is an arresting exercise to get high enough above the maelstrom of current events so that we can take a bird's-eye view of the translations

of the Bible into English and see how, apparently, a spirit greater than themselves has urged translators on until now and again a marvellous thing has been done, perhaps the most amazing thing in literature, the creation of a classic in one tongue out of the classics of another. When one does take such a view he feels the unity of the spirit behind all human life, for whether it is a cross-section of peoples to-day or a vertical section of the history of humanity, it is manifest that the call to create, to express adequately and understandingly the divine message, is a constantly reiterated call. It lifts men above mere words to a language beyond words which binds men's spirits together by a message transcending the Hebrew, Greek, Old English or modern English mode of revealing it, one mode thus giving way to another as the former becomes obsolete. This call, moreover, is never heard abstractly or far removed from the heart-throbs of daily life. And this is why a man or a body of men who can translate the Scripture into a living book for a needy people have achieved a work beyond what mere scholarship can accomplish. It may be secondary as creative work is judged, but now and again even translations rise to the height of primary creative achievements.

Once again in the history of the English Bible some power behind the spirit of the times seems to be thrusting forth into the arena scholars with

sympathy for the people and understanding of the text who can translate the biblical message into the English vernacular. As history is now repeating itself in this particular our curiosity is aroused to see if there are any similar elements in the social pressure of the different eras. When such a look is carefully taken, strange to say the outstanding modern problems seem to have been the outstanding problems in the days of Wyclif and Tyndale. If this is so why may not the wheel of time bring us soon again to such a high point in biblical translations as that of 1611, when the King James version was produced to stand for three centuries in undisputed possession of the honour of our greatest English classic? Is this such a wild dream as it seems, considering the elements that enter into great translations?

Looking back to the closing period of the Middle Ages and the beginning of The Great Awakening, we can discern certain struggles common to us, too, in our Renaissance. That this age in which we are living is one of the world's great eras of awakening is now recognized by all thinkers whether scientists or historians. Never since those turbulent and tremendous upheavals of the fifteenth century have the fundamental modes of thinking been so completely disturbed. The Creator himself seems again to be breaking up the crucible in which he has for the time being allowed human

philosophy and the foundation of reality to be moulded.

The shock to the conservative who had the plans for eternity all fixed according to a set pattern was not greater in Galileo's day than the shock to the conservatives to-day who have had to submit to evolution and historical criticism and to the electron and Einstein theories. The major tremor in the earthquake is felt when people seem to sense that the explanations of the universe which they had supposed were all settled by a divine fiat are not settled at all. Nothing is so because it is so, for thinkers question whether anything is just so except appearances.

Minor tremors almost as large but more local are the changes in the method of thinking and in the basis of authority, which affect the scholar primarily but soon reach the whole people. The thought of the Middle Ages was gripped as with a vise by the method called Scholasticism, a most meticulous argumentative method of arriving at truth, which gave way at last to a better method coming with a revival of interest in the classics, with romanticism and humanitarian sympathies. Man's spirit would have died by strangulation had it not with a mighty effort found its breath and poured forth its living energy in new forms. To-day the war between outworn dogmatism and scientific openmindedness is akin to the struggle

Wyclif heralded as one of the last of the Schoolmen and one of the first to question the dogmas of his day. The scientific method, whether applied to natural phenomena or historical documents, is an entirely different method from the scholastic or the dogmatic and is completely superseding it. Again man appears to be recovering his soul simply because his soul is asserting itself above the mere mechanism of the finely articulated scientific method that has encased him. The recovery of the soul in a spiritual, mystical experience of reality is the harbinger of a new creative epoch.

Another tremor in the earthquake has been the shift in the basis of authority. And here is a striking similarity between the two eras. Both sense the need of some ultimate court of appeal. Wyclif was beginning to question the authority of the Church and putting the Bible in its place. We are daring to question the Bible and are putting reason and experience in its place. But Wyclif was using reason and experience as a testimony to the place of the Bible and we are using reason and experience to lift the life and teaching of Jesus above a stereotyped, mechanical interpretation.

Finally, as we look at the social struggles of the two periods, we find people at grips on the same old problem of Poverty and Prosperity. The rich and the poor are always with us and now and again the issue between them becomes acute. It may be

a St. Francis who bolts the whole circle of his rich acquaintance and changes entirely the atmosphere of his life with his vow to Lady Poverty, or it may be a modern socialist who rages against the selfishness and wrong principles of the capitalist. But there we have it, a struggle acute and to the knife, with bitter words and lacerated hearts. In Wyclif's day it is a Peasant's Revolt. In the twentieth century it is a miners' strike.

Again the Church has to face the problem of economics. As sure as the Church holds property or has power over the pursestrings of the wealthy, the perennial quarrel between worldliness and saintliness recurs. A monk's garb and ecclesiastical robes, elaborate ritual and expensive buildings, may be the sign of the retreat rather than of the advance of the spirit. Wyclif and Tyndale lived in an age when the power of the Church was manifest in magnificent worldliness. The twentieth century Church is facing the same fundamental moral issue, that of serving both God and Mammon. In one respect, however, there is a great dissimilarity; the Church at the close of the Middle Ages had the masses absolutely in its hand, whereas the Church of the twentieth century is lying awake nights to devise methods of appealing to the masses.

But the spirit is greater than its temporary expression. No mode is fixed and eternal. Social and

ecclesiastical standards are simply left behind when the spirit breaks loose. The soul is greater than the body, life is greater than form, the inspired message is greater than ritual. The Book is more authoritative than the Church. Great literature is the final work because behind it is the breath of the living Spirit. But no living literature accepts finality as to its dress. Wyclif and Tyndale clothed the message in new garments and behold it lived. Scholars are again devising a new dress for an old book. Will it live again?

THE ROMANCE OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE

CHAPTER I

THE NEED OF A VERNACULAR BIBLE AT THE TIME OF WYCLIF AND OF TYNDALE

The Recurrence of Vernacular Literature

VERNACULAR is the speech of the common people. A living language like living people has its stages of growth. It is born in very humble circumstances and only after the growing pains of youth does it begin to be crowned with excellence. Always it is vivid and forceful, always it is changing to meet the changing conditions of the people who are speaking it. Custom and polite society dull the pointedness of language and smooth off its rough edges. The rushing, babbling, rhythmic stream of talk heard in a mountain village loses much of its picturesque appeal in the parlour conversation of culture. Its rough wit is exchanged for humorous subtleties which only the educated understand, the heat of its anger or its sympathies is controlled within conventional bounds. But the common people of village and town still go on breaking convention and expressing themselves as they feel. Formal language never gains power over them; they create the new words and phrases necessary for new occasions.

Sympathetic men of learning and culture realize that living language like living thought is essential to progress and understand that from time to time free verse and untrammelled diction must burst the bounds of conventional usage. Only at such periods does creative literature of a high order appear. Between lie barren plains with sluggish, muddy streams that turn no great mills of action in the midst of the years.

The fourteenth century, Wyclif's era, stands out uniquely in literary achievement and the sixteenth century, Tyndall's period, is another brilliant age. The fourteenth century shows the beginning of a creative epoch in English literature. Chaucer with his *Canterbury Tales,* Langland and his *Piers Plowman,* Wyclif and his *Lollard Bible*, are held in great honour as among the first chronologically of our English classics. And the sixteenth century is ripe with the richest fruit, some works in Latin, some in English, yet all owing their existence to the new appreciation of the life of the people. Sir Thomas More's *Utopia,* Tyndale's Bible, Francis Bacon's *Essays,* Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene,* Shakespeare's Dramas, are outstanding. These men were writing lasting literature. Bacon in his prefatory letter to his *Essays* says, "I doe conceive, that the Latine Volume of them (being in the Universall Language) may last as long as Bookes last." Perhaps not all were so conscious as Bacon was of writing for all time and doubtless they would have been surprised could they have realized that "the

Universall Language" in the twentieth century is fast becoming English instead of the classic Latin. But the reason for the fresh and positive outburst of genius in each of these centuries is that the thought and speech of the people was picked up by alert and creative minds and great messages sent back to the common folk in language they could understand.

In each period drifts of conservatism were piled high over the heads of everyday men and women. In each case it was spokesmen for the people at large that burst through this tradition and created literature. In Wyclif's day the educated were inaccessible to the uneducated. The Latin bulwark of the scholar's speech had to be pulled down and educated men dare to think and write in English before great national literature appeared. But the deposits of conservative inertia are hard to reduce. Life's fires must burn hot to vitalize them and after the first great outburst in the fourteenth century "the Renaissance found vernacular literature all but dead." Then the daring flame of genius licked up the life of the people and burst forth in words which not only they but future generations could understand. It is interesting to note how conservative tendencies in education hang over, for it was not until 1881 that the academic language of English universities was declared to be English and not Latin.

Pre-Reformation days were remarkable days; they called forth a few great men, whose flaming

torches lit those in younger hands till a light spread over all of Europe and our western world found itself in a new era. One of these torches was that of Wyclif. Many figures of speech have been used to symbolize his power. Such titles as "the flower of Oxford scholarship," "the morning star of the Reformation," have been applied to him. He has been classed with Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton as one of the makers of the English language. Bohemian students at Oxford took Wyclif's writings home with them and thus kindled the burning zeal of John Hus. Jerome of Prague went home saying that "young men and students who did not study the books of Wyclif would never find the true root of knowledge." There is a picture in an old Psalter in the university library at Prague which shows Wyclif striking a spark, Hus kindling the coals, and Luther brandishing the lighted torch.

But the sun did not really rise on the English language and literature until in 1526 baskets full of Tyndale's New Testament were burned at Paul's Cross, London. Those Bibles were found to be more than paper and print. They were spirit, the spirit of a creative genius that could not be consumed. That fire of fagots was lurid in contrast to the bright spiritual flame that caught up England and all English-speaking people in an enduring inspiration. For by 1611 Tyndale's vernacular Bible is found set ineradicably in the greatest classic of English-speaking peoples, the so-called Authorized Version.

Mediæval Conditions in England

To understand the influence of the vernacular Bibles of Wyclif and Tyndale in the development of English civilization we must take a look at England at the close of the mediæval period. At that time England presents a fascinating picture, not altogether unlike our own time in some particulars, very much unlike ours in many.

An international trade was beginning to create a class of wealthy merchants, international study and international politics were breeding breadth of view. Flemish weavers at York and in Gloucestershire, English students at Paris, Europeans at Oxford, Church councils at Rome and Bruges, Romish prelates and Florentine bankers in London, and Venetian ships in English waters gave zest to life among the more intelligent classes, and the sons of the wealthy could indulge themselves in Parisian wines and dress in foreign silks and embroideries. Thirty years after the death of Wyclif Portuguese adventurers were skirting the nearer coasts of the Atlantic along African shores. Tyndale was born about eight years before America was discovered by Columbus and within six years more seamen had crossed the Indian ocean. To-day the English merchant coming back to London on an English steamer is waited upon by descendants of those Portuguese pioneers who settled at Goa on the west coast of India when Vasco da Gama ventured so far eastward in his sailing vessel.

About the same time John and Sebastian Cabot sailed westward from Bristol, discovering Newfoundland, Hudson Bay, and Florida. The crusader's religious zeal had passed over into commercial and colonizing enterprise, as to-day commercial adventure has seized the imagination that a few years ago was kindled by the missionary pioneer.

Certain influential men were the multi-millionaires of that day. John of Gaunt owned the fief of Richmond near the little village where Wyclif was born. The earl-bishop of Durham owned the castles and estates of the whole county on the north border of the hamlet of Wycliffe-on-the-Tees, and the Berkeley family were for generations the great benefactors of Gloucestershire where Tyndale was born. Fifteen years before his birth this powerful house got into a quarrel over who should be heir of Berkeley Castle and fought a pitched battle in front of the church at Nibley Green near Nibley Knoll where now stands a monument to Tyndale, the cornerstone of which was laid in 1863 by Colonel Berkeley.

In the fourteenth century the workingman was beginning to rise and shake himself free from feudal overlordship, but he was not yet powerful enough to speak clearly. Serfdom was not over. Even the villein had to have his lord's permission to sell an ox and his lord's license to give his daughter in marriage. He must use his lord's mill to grind his flour, putting some of it in his master's sack, and

if he left the village without leave he was searched for, arrested and brought back as a run-away, unless he succeeded in staying away in a town a year and a day, when he could declare his freedom.

Village life was isolated and lonely, a "foreigner" meaning someone outside one's particular district. Wild animals and wild men made rural travel dangerous. There was a decided advance in stability of government and control of violence by Tyndale's day, yet as late as 1496 an Italian wrote that "there is no country in the world where there are so many thieves and robbers as in England." The days of Robin Hood were not yet forgotten; for Tyndale scores the clergy for encouraging the reading of his adventures rather than the Bible. Every tenant had to swear upon the gospels, "Hear this, Sir Steward, that I will not be a thief, nor will I conceal a theft nor a thief."

Indeed shrewdness in taking advantage in all sorts of business was as prevalent in the day of handwork as in our factory era. Berthold of Ratisbon, a noted preacher of the thirteenth century, says: "Ye that work in clothing, silks or wool or fur, shoes or gloves or girdles; men can in no wise dispense with you; men must needs have clothing, therefore should ye so serve them as to do your work truly; not to steal half the cloth, nor to use other guile, mixing hair with your wool or stretching it out longer, whereby a man thinketh to have gotten good cloth, yet thou hast stretched it to be

longer than it should be, and makest a good cloth into useless stuff. Nowadays no man can find a good hat for thy falsehood; the rain will pour down through the brim into his bosom. Even such deceit is there in shoes, in furs, in skins; a man sells an old skin for a new."

In spite of fairly comfortable clothing, gay and of many hues for the wealthy, plain and simple for the poor, all classes lived in a dirt that was "sublime." As a consequence the plague periodically swept away the inhabitants, and itch, scurvy, and leprosy abounded. Even a great university town like Oxford, where foreign visitors came frequently and where the king held his court occasionally, was a city of narrow, poorly paved streets and noisome smells, with open street gutters the only form of sewerage and private slaughter-houses and piggeries in the centre of the town. With no street lights except for a lantern hung here and there, towns at night were stumbling and dangerous places.

The well-to-do lived comfortably for the day with large houses of stone, or of wood and stone, the walls hung with tapestries, sometimes carpets upon the floors, the woodwork elaborately carved, with silver tankards on their tables, and quarters for many servants. Yet we should think their beds uncomfortable, their chairs and benches stiff; and heat and light would have been for us woefully lacking. The fuel was usually wood or peat, although coal was coming in as early as the thirteenth

century.[1] When a fire was to be kindled it took time, for flint and tinder must be used. Candles or wicks in a dish of oil served for lamps, and the story comes down to us that the great scholar Erasmus on his visit to England in the early part of the sixteenth century, read by moonlight because he could not afford a torch.

Meats and wines in abundance with highly seasoned sauces and wheat bread provided excellent fare for the well-to-do. Yet in good society forks were unknown. The city of York was in the vanguard of progress, for a citizen there used a fork as early as 1443. So late as 1575 there were no forks for university students. They used their fingers, being provided with napkins and fined a penny if they wiped their hands on the tablecloth. Home brewed beer was the common drink. Water was drawn from wells with a bucket or windlass, or dipped from a river. Carriages, wagons, and carts were known, of course, in Wyclif's day, but more often people travelled on foot or horseback, with pack horses to carry their loads.

The working people fared less comfortably. They wore clogs for shoes and their food was coarse. Their houses were made of "wattle and daub" and the window-holes were covered only with wooden shutters, or perhaps oiled linen or some poorly glazed material in the better houses.

---

[1]Henry III in 1239 granted the first charter for digging coal to the town of Newcastle. It was then called "sea-coal" because of its being shipped there by sea to distant places.

Rooms were small with low ceilings, and the floors were covered with rushes or straw, sometimes mixed with fragrant herbs. For the common people, to go to bed meant to fling themselves down on some straw in the clothes of the day. The mud hovels of the poor peasants were exceedingly bare, rude, and unwholesome, with a fire smouldering in the middle of the hut and no chimney to let out the smoke. The hours of work for peasants were long and they led hard lives.

The majority of the population was rural and even the largest towns would seem small to us. At the end of the fourteenth century London numbered only about thirty-five thousand inhabitants, and the thriving commercial city of Bristol had less than ten thousand. Even town dwellers were governed by rural life. During harvest the law-court at London took a vacation. In 1388 an English law required that all craftsmen whose work would allow of it must assist the farmers. This applied to the weavers of Norwich as late as the sixteenth century.

In the trades "apprentices" became "journeymen" when they were trained sufficiently to receive a full day's pay, and they in turn became "masters." Records show that the legal hours for work in the city of York from March to September were from five in the morning until seven-thirty in the evening with half an hour for breakfast and an hour and a half for dinner and a half holiday on Saturday. Eight weeks of the year were taken out

for holidays and vacations. Since there was no machinery to lift loads men doing heavy work were sometimes allowed rest during the day.

The market-place and the church were the centres for news, recreation, and instruction. Fairs that drew revelling crowds were held at stated intervals. Shop-keepers in town lived over their shops, the front room of the ground floor being open to the street for display of goods. Travelling pedlars supplied the country-folk with wares, strolling players with coarse entertainment.

The schools were attached to monasteries or cathedrals and were almost entirely for boys although there were a few girls' schools in some of the nunneries. Gentlemen's sons were admitted to the Inns of Court, even if their parents "desired them not to live by the practice of the Lawes," for their instruction included dancing and music and courtly manners as well as history, law, and theology. In cathedral schools usually only the three Rs and a little music was offered and not much more in the monastic schools.

At the end of the fifteenth century the New Learning, especially as found in Italy, seized the imagination of educators, and grammar schools of higher standing began to be started. One founded in Cirencaster, Gloucestershire, still exists, and John Colet's experiment at St. Paul's, London, became famous. The statutes of this school written in 1578 say that the Master shall be "learned in good, clean Latin and also in Greek, if such may be

gotten." Colet had been in Italy and there Vittorino da Feltre, the great teacher of the early fifteenth century who had been asked to tutor the children of the Marquis of Mantua, had founded a school with the startlingly new purpose of an all-around education, intellectually, morally, physically, that children might grow up to be good citizens. It was the fashion for eminent scholars to be invited by the wealthy to become tutors in their homes. Tyndale, after his university studies, began his life work as tutor and chaplain in Sir John Walsh's manor-house in Gloucestershire.

The Church was one of the most powerful institutions in existence. In the first half of the fourteenth century the population of England was probably between three and four millions and ecclesiastics numbered twenty or thirty thousand. The Church entered into every branch of life, political, economic, social, as well as religious, and had a great influence upon the rulers. It owned a great portion of the land, perhaps a third, and collected much revenue. It regulated the instruction of children and fostered learning. The church services were in Latin, not understood by the people and sometimes not even by the priests who mechanically mumbled them. The gay festivals of the year were held at first under its auspices and biblical teaching was made more vivid by means of miracle and morality plays, the priests in early times being actors. The liturgical dramas of Christmas and Easter lasted a number of days. Others gave the scenes of

Old Testament history. By the twelfth century the Peregrini, or picture of Jesus' journey to Emmaus, was produced. A Daniel play and a Lazarus play were very popular.

By the middle of the thirteenth century these liturgical plays were an accepted custom and as they became more elaborate, necessitating more actors and drawing larger crowds, they outgrew the capacity of the church buildings and were held in church yards or market places and members of guilds were allowed to take part, their officers walking in processions alongside the clergy, carrying torches while the priests sang the chants and litanies. Finally the management and financial responsibility passed over to the guilds. Then the ship-wrights would produce The Building of the Ark, the fishers and mariners Noah and the Flood, the goldsmiths The Adoration, the vintners The Wedding at Cana. At Hull, for example, the play of Noah was given annually with a "ship" in the procession and afterwards this "ship" was hung up in the church. The guilds finally appointed a pageant master regularly. When the more simple plays became merged with street processions pageantry developed and religious themes were illustrated in more and more spectacular and materialistic ways.

Later the revelry and ribald conduct at these very popular festivals drew reproof and condemnation from the stricter ecclesiastics. Bishop Grossetete was one of these who ordered the miracle plays to be done away with, and the Wyclifites

were known to be opposed to them. People had used them as an outlet for all their dramatic instinct, coarse or reverent. Their sense of humour seized on the story of Balaam's ass, their fear of the Devil was mollified by their delight in imps, their love of dancing, formerly an expression of religious joy, became in time a very questionable practice in the eyes of the clergy.[2] Moreover those who took part were criticized from the standpoint of good acting. In 1378 the scholars of St. Paul's petitioned the king to stop "inexpert people" from acting. The expenses of such pageants finally became so enormous that certain guild members appointed as "feast-makers" were ruined, and in 1495 there was a decree that wardens only should be feast-makers.

One of the most elaborate of mediæval pageants was that of Corpus Christi day, the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, when the mystery of the doctrine known as Transubstantiation was pictured in a very realistic fashion. All the church dignitaries accompanied by the members of the religious organizations and the guilds of the town formed in procession carrying the Host through the streets, stopping at various places along the way to exhibit it to the crowd. When Richard II visited York in 1397 a most elaborate Corpus Christi entertainment was produced. Such customs fostered superstition rather than true reverence. To understand

[2]Among Shakespeare's references to these old plays he mentions in *Henry V* the Whitsun morris dance, a gay festival dance in honour of the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and speaks of the "roaring devil i' the old play."

the strong disapproval of the doctrine of Transubstantiation which Wyclif and Tyndale expressed and their urgent appeal for a knowledge of the simple account of Scripture, one must understand the local setting and the abuses of the time as well as read their philosophical arguments.

One point, however, should be noted especially in connection with the development of the English language and literature. The popular character of these biblical and liturgical plays necessitated a gradual introduction of the vernacular in place of the Latin text, and the vernacular was becoming decidedly English. Until the middle of the fourteenth century French was the language of the élite; but in 1362 a statute ordered the use of English in law courts "because the French tongue is much unknown," and in 1363 the Chancellor opened Parliament in English.

The guilds were the great economic factor of the Middle Ages and were yoked with the Church in many ways. Merchants and nobles gave generously to charity, which was for the most part under ecclesiastical supervision. They founded hospitals and schools and endowed university halls and scholarships upon the advice of bishops or monastic orders. They built cathedrals and churches, kept up their own private chapels with chaplains, in their wills left money for candles to be burned and masses to be said for themselves and their relatives. One of their popular methods for raising money for charitable purposes was not dissimilar

to our own. They would stage plays, charging a fee for admission. In 1505 the church wardens of Kingston-on-Thames needed to repair their steeple and earned £4 in this way.

The institutions of the confessional and of indulgences gave the Church a most intimate hold upon the consciences, fears, and purses of the well-to-do and the poor alike. The "Pardoner" with his relics, so well depicted by Chaucer, went his rounds among the villages, and an archbishop might proclaim an indulgence for forty days to those who would help some enterprise, such as the reconstruction of the cloister and buildings of the friars of York that had been destroyed by fire in 1455. Priests and friars were very numerous in town and country, for it took many men to carry on all the various functions of the Church.

Everything was aimed to make the Church impress the people—the magnificence of the cathedrals, the ornateness of its interior, the richness of its stained glass, the embroideries of priestly vestments, the pictures, symbolism, and formalities in its service. All this as well as the fact that the rewards of life and death were apparently in its hands, made an ignorant populace subservient. As a matter of course Aves and Paters were mumbled, crossings made before meals, saints invoked, and fines paid. Mass was said every day and the leisure class expected to attend, labourers being excused except on Sundays, when a fine was imposed for absence. Parishioners were not infrequently ex-

communicated for dire offences, and the person denounced was warned for the benefit of the entire congregation, this in the vulgar tongue which they could understand, rather than the sacred unintelligible Latin. Since the majority could not read nor write religious instruction was largely by oral and pictorial methods and this in itself fostered dependence on the clergy. Much of the service and many of the rites and practices were like magic, and superstitious reverence was not confined to the peasant class.

The priests themselves were comparatively ignorant. In 1222 seventeen parishes of Berkshire were visited and five of the clergy found unable to construe or sing the Mass. In 1551 Bishop Hooper made the rounds of the parishes in his diocese. Of the 311 clergymen he found 171 who could not repeat the Ten Commandments, ten could not say the Lord's Prayer in English, and seven did not know its author. Even the learned priests were often only trained in the skillful arguments of the schoolmen about trivial dogmas. To dispute concerning the state of angels, whether they had form or not, and their means of conversation, and whether they could be in two places at once, was considered as worthy a subject of thought as personal morals. Indeed it was often a fact that morals were not essential to holding the priest's office. But to argue as to how many angels could dance upon the point of a pin was very important to the scholastic mind, which cared not a whit about the correct

exegesis of Scripture. This is the way Tyndale later described the teaching of the schoolmen. "First," he said, "they nosel them in sophistry and in *benefundatum.*[3] . . . What wonderful dreams have they of their predicaments, universals, second intentions, *quiddities, haecceities,* and relatives . . . whether the proposition be true *Non ens est aliquid;* whether *ens* be aequivocum, or univocum. *Ens* is *univocum,* saith another, and descendeth into *ens creatum,* and *ens increatum,* per modos *intrinsecos.*[4] When they have this wise brawled eight, ten, or twelve more years, and after that their judgments are utterly corrupt, then they begin their divinity; not at the scripture, but every man taketh a sundry doctor."[5]

The priests were merely links in a long chain fastened tight to the See of Rome. Rome cared not for local conditions and the welfare of the people, but rather for her great system that upheld her power. Moreover, politically, in the first half of the fourteenth century England still felt the effects of the disputes with Scotland over her independence, which had kept the north in a turmoil for years with violent raids under a Wallace or a Bruce until finally King Edward triumphed. The middle of that century saw The Hundred Years' War with France begun, draining the English purse and

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[3]That which is grounded on sure premises.

[4]This is after the famous schoolman, Duns Scotus, from which our word *dunce* is derived.

[5]From *The Obedience of a Christian Man.*

English yeomanry. In this struggle the yeoman with his crossbow felled the knight with his spear and economic and legal forces were brought to bear upon feudalism until it began to wane. The last of this century saw the Great Revolt and the first of the fifteenth was rife with the persecution of Wyclif's Lollards. By the middle, the two great houses of York and Lancaster were quarrelling and the Wars of the Roses began. The historian Green says, "Their savage battles, their ruthless executions, their shameless treasons, seem all the more terrible from the pure selfishness of the ends for which men fought." Then Tyndale was born and before he died Henry the Eighth, taking advantage of all the previous protests, lit the match to the English Protestant movement, defying the Pope and all his prelates in order to divorce Catharine and marry Anne of Boleyn.

It was a rough, superstitious age, with a coarse standard of morality. Drunkenness and sexual vice were common. Fears and passions were played upon by the knowing and punishments were meted out in harsh fashion. The stocks, pillory, and ducking-stool were the common punishments; fines, banishments, excommunication, imprisonment, hanging and burning awaited more serious offences. All felonies were punished by death, including the theft of an article of as small value as a shilling; traitors were hung, drawn and quartered, the head and quarters being sent to various cities for exhibit on gateways or towers.

Yet it was a very appealing, human age and with all the abuses, poverty, and ignorance there was bravery and generosity, magnificence and beauty. There was adventure, gaiety, luxury, laziness, squalor and misery, all very obvious and taken for granted. Despite its ignorance it was an age of remarkable beauty in church architecture, of cathedral building and ornamentation. Stately structures that are now the wonder and admiration of the world arose as monuments to its artistic sense and skill. It was also a time of genuine religious sincerity. Richard Rolle of Hampole wrote *The Fire of Love* and *The Mending of Life* and had translated the Psalms into English when Wyclif was a boy, and Juliana of Norwich wrote the *Revelations of Divine Love* in 1373, and Walter Hilton, another contemporary of Wyclif, was "travailing busily with all the powers of his soul to fulfil the truth of a good life." These are examples of a true and beautiful mystical spirit which flourished in the fourteenth century.

The Part Played by Wyclif and Tyndale

In the atmosphere of this age, when it was just beginning to feel the throbs of a new life, Wyclif was born, vigorously to take part in the affairs of the nation, sincerely to brood over the needs of the people, brilliantly to master the scholarship of the age, and at the end of the century to produce a vernacular Bible, because, as he said, "many Prel-

ates are too ignorant of Holy Scripture, while others conceal many parts of it; and as the verbal instruction of priests have many other defects, the conclusion is abundantly manifest that believers should ascertain for themselves what are the true matters of their faith, by having the Scriptures in a language which all may understand," for "Christian men should stand to the death for the maintenance of Christ's Gospel and the true understanding thereof by holy life and great study."

But Wyclif's work was soon submerged. Even he made no real break in thought with the Middle Ages. He was primarily a schoolman. "This failure to give to his age that which was vitally new probably accounts for the surprising fruitlessness of his movement in England."[6] Another century and a half and Tyndale's vernacular Bible appears, founded not on the imperfect Latin Vulgate but on the Hebrew and Greek texts. Under the inspiration of the Renaissance William Tyndale had caught the vision of classical learning, of historical criticism, yes even of the evolution of ideas within the Bible itself, and laid at the service of the English-speaking people the fruit of his keen, forward-looking mind. Living conditions and popular ignorance were gradually changing and at the close of the fifteenth century the world was making great advance in horizons of thought and methods of knowledge. William Tyndale had the brains and the consecration to grasp this opportunity. Tyn-

[6]Walker, Williston, *Great Men of the Christian Church*, p. 209.

dale's Bible was a version from the original tongues welded into an English classic by a marvellously understanding and sympathetic mind. He said: "They will say it cannot be translated into our tongue, it is so rude. It is not so rude as they are false liars. For the Greek tongue agreeth more with the English than with the Latin and the properties of the Hebrew tongue agreeth a thousand times more with the English than with the Latin. The manner of speaking is both one; so that in a thousand places thou needest not but to translate it into English, word for word; when thou must seek a compass in the Latin, and yet shall have much work to translate it well-favouredly, so that it have the same grace and sweetness, sense and understanding with it in the Latin as it hath in the Hebrew."

It was not merely as a linguist that he spoke but almost like a modern research scholar seeking to know the historical setting and the spirit of the original writer. "Christ commandeth to search the scriptures. . . . Why shall I not see the scripture, and the circumstances, and what goeth before and after; that I may know whether thine interpretation be the right sense?"[7] Tyndale saw the need of a radical reform in scholarship and a radical reform in education. Breaking completely from the old scholastic and proof-text method he could almost be chairman of a modern Religious Educa-

[7]From *The Obedience of a Christian Man.* Preface to the Reader. Edited by the Parker Society, Cambridge, 1848.

tion Association. For after quoting the passage in Deuteronomy 6, "Let these words which I command thee this day stick fast in thy heart and whet[8] them on thy children, and talk of them as thou sittest in thine house, and as thou walkest by the way," he says: "How cometh it that God's word pertaineth less unto us, than unto them? . . . How can we whet God's word upon our children and household, when we are violently kept from it and know it not?"

[8] I. e., "put it into practice, use and exercise."

CHAPTER II

WYCLIF THE PIONEER

Wyclif's Background

In Yorkshire in the north of England, probably in a manor house on the top of a hill with a little village of a hundred souls huddling at its foot, Wyclif was born about the year 1328.[1] The manor and the river flowing near gave the village its name, Wycliffe-on-the-Tees. Seven hundred and twenty acres surrounded the house, a country-side of beautiful landscape. The name of Wyclif has been spelled in over thirty ways and there is some confusion in identifying individuals but the traditions of this family have come down in unbroken line. Wyclif had one older brother, probably two younger than himself, and two cousins. He was baptized as John, much to the disgust later of an offended monk who said, "This fellow was called John, though he did not deserve to be."

John grew up, therefore, in the household of a landlord, in intimate acquaintance with rural life and the condition of the villagers. It was a lonely

[1]This is the corrected date given by Workman, H. B. *John Wyclif,* Oxford, 1926. See also H. D. Prichett's *John Wycliffe* for discussion of birthplace. The present author is convinced by personal investigation that Wycliffe-on-the-Tees has this honour.

place with rough experiences, so near the borderland of Scotland that marauders were still threatening. On his walks the boy could find the remains of ancient British earthworks and Saxon relics. The church at Wycliffe to be seen to-day dates back in its oldest parts to 1240. It was rebuilt when John was growing up and probably his parents helped the enterprise. Bits of the early stained glass are still there, for they did not feel toward such church decoration as their famous son did later. There was a water-mill for grinding flour, making these villagers quite independent of the outside world, for their clothes were home-spun.

Eleven miles south of his home was the parish of Richmond. This was the largest town near by. The houses clustered about a stately Norman castle. Its majestic tower, one hundred feet high, can still be seen. Richmond had a fine church belonging to the abbey of St. Mary in the city of York, the great industrial centre of Yorkshire, forty-two miles distant. John Wyclif may well have heard the same bells of Richmond ring which we may hear to-day, and doubtless the young boy was greatly interested when its city walls were being built.

Here he probably came on market-days and for fairs. Here he would sometimes see merchants from foreign lands and one or more of the ten monks belonging to the Benedictine monastery or some of the Franciscans from their friary. There were two mills in this town, a common oven, and a hospital just outside. He would hear of the fate

of the Scottish raid on Richmond in 1318 when his own little village escaped, and of another raid in 1321 when an abbey near his home was almost destroyed. He would be able to appreciate the terror of the peasants, the reason for the sparse population of Yorkshire, and their poverty in not being able to pay the six hens a year exacted for the privilege of getting firewood. When Wyclif was about three Richmond passed into the possession of the man who was to have much to do with his career, the powerful John of Gaunt. In *Piers Plowman* he is the cat of the court who prevents the rats of parliament from quite eating up the mice who are the people.

The city of York was, and is, one of the interesting cities of the north of England. With its exquisite cathedral, not yet completed in Wyclif's time, the palace of its archbishop, its beautiful abbey and other religious buildings, its castle with moats, drawbridges and towers, its homes of nobles, its four leper hospitals, its Flemish weavers and foreign sailors, its important merchant guilds and guild-hall, and the royal mint, it must have been very impressive to the young Wyclif on his first visit. Alcuin, the great teacher and adviser of Charlemagne's court, came from here and here it was that Wyclif was later ordained.

Nearer on the north was the palatine city of Durham, with its castles and great cathedral and its rich prince-bishop, a city which made on the young Wyclif such an indelible impression of the

RUINS OF ST. MARY'S ABBEY, YORK

A PREACHING CROSS BY THE OLD FRIARY, HEREFORD

worldliness of the Church that in his writings he uses it as an example of the "insolent" pride of the clergy and the low state of religion. Before the close of Wyclif's life the Bishop had built his throne in this cathedral several inches higher than that of the Pope. It was in this county of Durham that coal mines and a little iron were beginning to be exploited in Wyclif's youth.

Thus John Wyclif went to Oxford as a scholar with the northern accent and the sturdy, honest, blunt, tenacious characteristics of the old Saxon people, kept in the north much longer than in the south. A young man of brains with an earnest and brave spirit and a pure heart, he soon made his mark as a scholar and before the end of his life had a unique hold upon the people of England.

The Oxford of Wyclif's Day

Oxford was an important walled city not far from London, at the head of navigation on the Thames River, and protected on three sides by water. It was important commercially, as a military post, as one of the royal residences, and a seat of learning. It was a small town, a half mile from east to west and a quarter of a mile from north to south. The houses, with space for gardens, were crowded close, and the streets were mere alleys. In the early part of the thirteenth century the inhabitants numbered perhaps one thousand souls. The Normans had laid it waste but prosperity soon

followed in the wake of the new era, trade picked up, wooden houses gave way to stone, and churches were rebuilt. The earliest authentic data concerning the town comes from the tenth century. It developed first into a business borough with many guilds. The Jews sought it as a centre of trade and were rudely expelled after a disgraceful riot in 1268.

Before 1250 there is no trace of university life, but by the end of the century there are frequent references to it, and before the close of the fourteenth century the first group of colleges was founded, including Merton, University, Balliol, Exeter, Oriel, Queens, and New Colleges. Before the colleges were started students lived in the houses of the town. Chaucer's "poor scholar" lodged with a carpenter. Sometimes a number of students would hire a house and live together with a senior in the responsible position of principal, who paid the rent and insured good conduct. These houses were given names, sometimes for the owner, sometimes in jest, as Mutton, Veale, Beefe, or Pie. Sometimes the swinging sign over the door would be Elephant, Lion, or Saracen's Head. When the colleges were founded these halls in town were gradually abandoned.

Orders of monks arrived early. There were Black Friars, Grey Friars, White Friars, Austin Friars and Benedictines. Students soon began to increase and in Wyclif's day the town was said to hold thousands, drawn from Europe as well as all

parts of England. Englishmen had been to Paris and now Parisians were returning the compliment, for Oxford was becoming the leading university of the world. Latin was the common language of all scholars, a uniting bond for Englishmen of different dialects as well as foreigners. Some learned men had already appeared, the Dominicans first, then a famous group of Franciscans, Adam Marsh, Roger Bacon who was "Doctor Mirabilis," Duns Scotus, and William Ockham.

The titles applied to scholars were copied from the guilds, a Guild of Study thus becoming a University. It took seven years of study to become a "Master." An intermediate stage was that of "Bachelor" meaning "youth," which was similar to "assistant" in the guilds. The "Bachelor" was a pupil no longer but had not become a teacher. The candidates for the Master's degree knelt before the Chancellor in a low vaulted chamber in St. Mary's church as he bestowed upon them their teachers' licenses. A candidate for the degree of "Doctor" of theology was required to study much further and as a part of his examination he was to preach a sermon in Latin not longer than two hours. When the Masters were given power to teach they sat at a raised desk in a special gown lecturing two or three hours at a time.

John Wyclif, about sixteen, started sometime in September, probably 1345, for the already famous seat of learning at Oxford. Men called "fetchers" were sent over the country to bring young boys to

college. Without doubt he had such an escort or the company of a travelling monk. Down the old Roman road from Yorkshire he would wend his way, eagerly taking in the sights as he passed through towns or met different kinds of travellers. Pedlars, priests, mountebanks, and robbers were on the road. Especially were young students, provided with the money for the year, warned to be on their guard.

The scholastic term began in October and Wyclif probably entered Balliol College. The founder was a Northerner, Sir John de Balliol, Lord of Barnard Castle, which was only five miles from Wycliffe-on-the-Tees. About 1260 this lord "unjustly taxed and enormously damnified" the Church of Tynemouth and the Church of Durham and had "gotten himself exceedingly drunk." As a penance he was obliged to kneel at the door of Durham Abbey and be publicly scourged by the Bishop. In addition he was to provide perpetual scholarships for sixteen poor students at Oxford, eightpence a week for each, which was enough for their food and lodging. After his death his widow bought and endowed a house for the sixteen scholars and thus Balliol College came into existence, where boys from the north were especially welcome. This was in 1310. In 1327 the scholars themselves had erected a chapel. We know that later there was a garden, for the records of Coroners' Inquests of 1382 give the sad death of a student by the name of William Scrym who "was climbing a tree in the

close of Balliolle halle to reach and overthrow a nest of magpies, and so by chance his foot slipped and he fell to the ground and sickened from that day until the Tuesday; and so died."

By the time Wyclif appeared college regulations were well established. The university then admitted quite young boys and this younger group were to wait upon the Master of the college and the graduate students. At meals all were to keep silence except one scholar who was to read aloud from some book, and if conversation were necessary Latin must be used. The second time a student used English at table he was banished to a corner of the room to eat by himself. "To live like saints and to speak Latin" was the standard held up at Oxford. At first there was one monitor for twenty boys, later one for ten. The fare was very simple. At Merton College it was expressly stated that the scholars must be satisfied with bread and beer and one course of flesh and fish a day. In some residences students were allowed soup thickened with oatmeal, and baked meat, with salt fish in Lent. Their food was served on wooden trenchers, the main meal coming at ten or eleven with supper at five.

Their rooms were very small and dingy, rarely single rooms, the students often sharing the one bed as well as the room. Sometimes one of the little boys slept in a trundle bed. Besides the bed, furniture consisted of a stool, a tripod table and a chair, with a desk and bookcase combined. Dirt was not objectionable. Slops were thrown out of

the window. As late as 1612 at Trinity College, Cambridge, there was only a common lavatory with a towel eight or nine yards long hung on a hook.

Many of the students were quite poor and earned a part of their living by waiting on their instructors or other students. One poor student was nominated by the authorities to be fed from "the leavings or broken meats of their tables." Wandering scholars would beg in vacations, sometimes getting a meal for composing or singing a Latin song. Some came to college on foot with their possessions in a bundle slung over the shoulder. Others were well enough off to come with servants.

The Oxford traders took advantage of this horde of youngsters by overcharging, until the university had to regulate their exorbitant prices. Records tell us that "a fat hen or two chickens cost a penny," this price set by the king. Only the well-to-do had a change of clothes, and no student had a fire in his room. If his feet were cold he must take a run to get them warm. Ordinary buildings were made of mud and clay and covered with thatch, and the floors were covered with rushes.

St. Mary's Church was the centre of university life and all about its precincts students could be met in many-coloured dress, some with heads tonsured, some with long hair and beards, some wearing fur on their coats, some with fancy shoes of red and green. Servants carried the books of certain students and of the Doctors. Bachelors wore capes,

Masters a sleeveless gown, heelless shoes, and a square cap with a tuft on top. Doctors of law or theology could be distinguished by their hoods. It was a cosmopolitan place. Students from France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Ireland, Wales, and Scotland could be heard speaking in their native tongues.

Perhaps the university numbered as many as four thousand students. It gave occupation for many tradesmen, not only venders of supplies and vintages, but those engaged in trades contributing directly to scholarship, such as copying, illuminating, engrossing, and binding manuscripts. Books were scarce and laboriously made. Valuable ones were kept in chests and loaned to students only on security. Some were chained in the chancel of the church. In 1412 the records say that only graduates or members of religious orders of eight years' standing could use them and then under solemn oath to treat them carefully.

Students were frequently under inspection. "General Inquisitions" were conducted by a Doctor of theology and two Masters, and misdemeanours seriously punished all the way from fines to imprisonment. A certain prison was named Bocardo, supposedly by sarcastic students who had been studying that syllogism in logic and had learned that one could not "bring himself back into his first figure" without special help. When the curfew rang at night all gathered in the hall, sang to the Virgin, and retired.

Not all time was spent in studying; certain games were allowed. Students could play with a soft ball but not with a bat, they could play cards on holidays but chess was a "noxious, inordinate and unhonest game." Dogs could not be kept. There was not yet room enough for all in the college halls and many students found lodgings in town but the townspeople were not over-friendly. The rivalry between town and gown was even then apparent. Scholars walking in the narrow streets might be pelted with offal and knives were ready at the least provocation.

Disgraceful riots were constantly occurring both within and without the college precincts. In the days of Henry III an Irish chaplain came begging at a kitchen door and the chief cook threw boiling broth in his face, occasioning a great disturbance which could be stopped only by the king sending his soldiers. The most notorious riot was that on St. Scholastic's Day, 1355, when some students went to a tavern and called for wine. The vintner brought it "but they disliking it and he avouching it to be good, several snappish words passed between them. At length the vintner giving them stubborn and saucy language, they threw the wine and vessel at his head."[2] Before the affair was over six university men were killed and twenty-one seriously hurt and several citizens lost their lives. Edward III finally decided the case in favour of the University.

[2]A. Wood's account.

Within the colleges Northerners and Southerners were constantly picking at each other. This came out in theological discussions as well as trivial affairs. When Wyclif's doctrines were assailed the Northerners stood by their comrade. It was to these surroundings that the youthful Wyclif came. He was exchanging the discipline of a Yorkshire monastic school for the greater intellectual freedom of the university, and with other Northern boys he submitted to the regulations of Balliol which later was to become "a very hotbed of University democracy." In the course of thirteen or fourteen years of study and teaching Wyclif became its Master. Balliol has been proud of many great men. In recent years Dr. Jowett made her famous, and Robert Browning was an honorary fellow, but no name is more to her credit than that of John Wyclif.

The instruction of those days was almost wholly of the scholastic type. A little mathematics and science was beginning to enliven the dull program of lengthy hair-splitting argumentation in Latin over dry dogma. Wyclif, too, was a schoolman and many of his theological writings were so uninteresting that they would have been utterly destroyed had it not been for his enthusiastic Bohemian disciples who took them over to Europe. It has been said that "after three or four hundred years the scholastics had not untied a single knot or added an unequivocal truth to the domain of philosophy." But Wyclif benefited by this dry argumentative

training so that he could criticize and reason with such keenness that no opponent was a match for him. He was the last of the schoolmen but he was more: he was the first of the reformers, breaking loose from the futilities of formalism which he understood so well and daring to challenge the Pope for his imperious policies.

Priest or Friar

Wyclif was not poor. Brought up in comparative comfort in a manor-house, he himself became its lord before he was thirty-five, without, however, gaining much of an income, for he had his mother to support and he was often hard pressed. But although he was not poor, he was very much attracted in his younger days to the Franciscans and their devotion to Lady Poverty. They had come to London in 1224, had soon established themselves at Oxford, and had spread all over England. Wyclif was accustomed to see them walking the streets of Richmond and York in bare feet with coarse russet gowns, a knotted cord for a girdle.

The friars had come in the spirit of their founder, but the Franciscans of England as well as Italy were soon divided into two parties, the spiritually minded and the worldly minded. St. Francis had favoured the simple, unpretentious life in every respect; even learning, to his mind, led men away from simple faith. But so far had they departed from the ideas of their founder that the

reputation of Oxford at the start was due largely to a brilliant group of Franciscan scholars. St. Francis had also sent his wandering brothers out among the people, without purse or food, to show themselves in perfect sympathy with the poor, with only one gift in their hand, the gift of kindness. But it was not long after his death before the begging friars were thinking more of what they were to get than what they were to give, and turning their friaries into comfortable resorts for the lazy rather than mere stopping-places for earnest "brothers minor." Their preaching had become nothing more than a string of amusing stories with no object but to exalt the miraculous powers of some saint or to entertain people in order to get better meals. They neglected the confessional and catered to popularity. Their ethical code became so sadly degenerate that a common saying in England was, "this is a friar and therefore a liar."

Wyclif had seen the Franciscan ideals of simplicity and honest sincerity in trying to carry out literally the teaching of Jesus. He fell under their spell somewhat as the early Italian disciples had been attracted to St. Francis himself. He adopted a simple, coarse garb and walking staff, and later sent his own followers, the "Lollards,"[3] out over England in much the same fashion as the friars had traversed the country. In his young manhood

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[3]Lollard probably means wandering "chanter," derived from an Old Dutch word *lollen*, "to sing." *Lolleard* means "mumbler of prayers." (See Workman, *John Wyclif*, Vol. I, Appendix.)

he said, "the Franciscans are very near to God"; but when his keen, honest mind perceived their gross inconsistencies he completely lost faith in them and vigorously denounced them, calling them "ravishing wolves" and "members of the Devil."

And so Wyclif did not become a friar but an ordinary priest. All the scholars of the day were either "secular" priests or monks, accepting "livings" for support while they pursued some more congenial task than ministering faithfully to their flock. Wyclif accepted parish appointments and at first held them as an absentee scholar in Oxford, but he was too conscientious and too sympathetic with the needs of the people not to realize his duties and see the inconsistencies of many priestly practices. He was the leading teacher of his time, conspicuous as a philosopher and skillful dialectician, and he was also a man of political sense and power. Even an unfriendly chronicler called him a great theologian. Yet with the people of his parishes he was simple and straightforward, laying aside his scholarly Latin for their own plain English tongue, preaching simple lessons of homely righteousness. He was not a mystic but interested especially in the ethical side of religious belief. His practical mind analyzed politics as well as theology down to principles of conduct. In his later years he took time as a resident pastor for the offices of a true shepherd of the people, full of kindness and thoughtful deeds. No wonder when he faced the storm of angry prelates he found the citizens of

Oxford and the common folk of the country on his side. So great was his hold on people high and low that the Church did not dare go quite to the limit of persecution with him.

It was not surprising that the Church was angered by the priest Wyclif. He knew the corruption of official church circles from the inside and he knew the conditions of the life of both lords and peasants. He wrote that "the clergy rival the secular lords in their sumptuous habits and the secular lords seek to outshine the clergy in their style of living and dress and so the realm suffers manifold pains." He laid the poverty of the peasantry and their low standard of morals at the door of the two upper classes. "Oh! how happy and fertile would England be if every parish church had as of yore a saintly rector residing with his family and children! Then there would not be so much arable land lying fallow and so great a dearth of cattle. . . . Now there are but hirelings who are lazy, indifferent to the tillage of the ground since it is not theirs; who take to theft because of the lack of oversight by a resident squire; who are unbridled in character, and with unrestrained license squander the wealth of the realm."

Wyclif was a man of strong opinions and expressed them in bold, blunt language. He called his enemies "black dogs," the Pope "a poisonous weed" and "a limb of Lucifer," " a simple idiot," and "a more horrible idol than a painted log." Falseness and sham anywhere and everywhere he hated and

dared expose. The cardinals he called "the hinges of the broad road that leads to the pit," the bishops he said had become "dumb fools in the realm of hell," "dumb hounds that may not bark in time of need," the vicars who could neither sing nor read properly because they were so ignorant but rode fat horses with gay saddles he declared were "full damnable before God," the "pardoner" who went about selling indulgences was a "vile quack." The superstitious beliefs of the Church he assailed with vigour, calling the teaching of Transubstantiation a "pestiferous doctrine." In return he was called a "pertinacious heretic," and after his death the Archbishop issued an order to censor all his writings. Two hundred and sixty-seven of his propositions were condemned and the pernicious books solemnly burned. His disciples were called "children of perdition" and ordered to be excommunicated or burned.

Yet Wyclif himself might be summoned before the Pope, and never go; before the Convocation of Canterbury, and not need to say a word because his supporters were so strong; before the Bishop of London, and escape unscathed because his friend the Duke of Lancaster (John of Gaunt) threatened to drag the Bishop out of the church by the hair of his head. The Pope ordered the university to condemn and arrest him, but Oxford resented the order and simply told him to stay quietly within the walls. And finally when he was to be tried in the chapel of Lambeth Palace the Princess of Wales,

mother of Richard II, sent a peremptory message which stopped any action against him.

He died in the Lutterworth rectory, having been stricken with paralysis while he was celebrating the Mass as a parish priest. Priest he was and a vicar of God, for not even his bitterest enemy could assail the integrity of his personal character. But as to his orthodoxy the chronicler railed at him after his death as an "instrument of the Devil," and the Archbishop called him "a serpent that emits noxious poison."

His Vernacular Version

And so retiring to the rectory of Lutterworth with a few of his faithful followers he bent his energies with their help to the production of an English Bible out of the Latin. This was his crowning work although his time was filled with many occupations. He was very busy with parish duties as well as with his pen but he continued to write tracts, some of them against the conduct of the friars, and others political pamphlets. He edited his sermons both in English and in Latin; he made an elaborate summary of his beliefs in thirteen volumes; he wrote letters to Roman officials and English lords, and reiterated to them his former declarations in words like these: "Were there a hundred popes and all the friars turned into cardinals, their opinions in matters of faith should not be accepted except in so far as they are founded on Scripture."

But the writings which led to the vernacular translation of the Bible were his commentaries on the New Testament and prologues to the commentaries. In pursuing this work he saw the need of a complete Bible in English and stirred up his devoted disciples, John Purvey and Nicholas de Hereford, to help him undertake it.

Wyclif's part in this translation is thought by some recent scholars to have been merely the portions of the Bible found translated or paraphrased in vigorous style in his sermons and commentaries, and the actual translation of the text to have been the work of his disciples, Purvey and Nicholas de Hereford. Other scholars maintain that Wyclif himself had a hand upon both the Old and New Testaments.

John Purvey was Wyclif's closest friend and the best scholar among his followers. He was a "noted doctor" of Oxford, a student there under Wyclif and one of the leaders in the Lollard movement. He became their "librarian" and Wyclif's library was one of considerable importance. When Wyclif transferred his home to Lutterworth he went with him as his scribe and "drank deep of Wyclif's most secret teaching." He was a faithful helper, also translating on his own account. A careful scholar, his principles of translation hold even today. It is due to him that the work inspired by his master was finally presented to the public in such excellent form.

Purvey had no easy task in revising Wyclif's

paraphrases and producing a simple, vivid, readable text. Dean Milman has thus characterized Wyclif as a writer: "His Latin was dry, argumentative, syllogistic, abstruse, obscure; his English was rude, coarse, but clear, emphatic, brief, vehement, with short, stinging sentences, and perpetual hard antitheses." Wyclif held that "a flowery, captivating style of address is of little value compared to right substance." He was keen, daring, and honest even to bluntness, while often sarcastic and sometimes witty. He was exhibiting in his writings the transition from the cut-and-dried scholastic type of thinking to the humanism of a new era. He could argue in Latin as a dialectician with the scholars of his day but he sent his Lollards out with an English message simple and easily understood, and this helped mould the native speech into a literary language. However, it was Purvey's scholarship and skill which were needed to polish and complete Wyclif's work.

Purvey worked first upon the New Testament and Nicholas de Hereford on the Old. Nicholas was chancellor of the cathedral at Hereford and pursued his task there. He had been bursar at Queen's College where Wyclif had rooms and thus had come under his influence. His translation was by no means so good as Purvey's, being a more slavish following of the Vulgate. Purvey afterwards thoroughly revised it, smoothing out many stiff Latinisms. In 1382 the Blackfriars Synod condemned Nicholas de Hereford as well as Wyclif

for heresy and later the Pope sentenced him to life imprisonment at Rome. Nicholas was released, returning to England only to hide because of orders for arrest. Captured and "greviously tormented" he recanted under the torture. Poor Purvey was likewise imprisoned. In his "foul unhonest prison" he was "greviously tormented and punished" and also recanted.

The Wyclifite Bible we now possess is doubtless mostly Purvey's. It was done of course in manuscript, printing being unknown until a century later. In fact it was not until 1731 that the Wyclifite New Testament came out in print and 1850 when the whole Bible so appeared. The manuscript copies had to be painstakingly made by copyists. Some were in vellum richly illuminated for the wealthy. One beautifully illuminated copy which belonged to a certain Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, is now in the British Museum. The majority, however, were cheaper, smaller, more perishable copies for the common people. One hundred and seventy Wyclifite Bibles are known to exist to-day, one hundred and forty of them being Purvey's final version.

Thus the Bible which had been a sealed book to ordinary folk became common property, as the Lollards spread its acquaintance far and wide. To some this was shocking. They said "the jewel of the clergy had become the toy of the laity." Moreover they said that Latin, so long associated with the holy Word that it was considered by many a

holy language, was displaced by a tongue as harsh as "the grunting of pigs or the roaring of lions." Wyclif wrote, "Our pharisees and satraps state that a man ought not to preach nor to collect the gospel in the vulgar tongue," and "friars, bishops and their abettors are shocked that the Gospel should become known in English." Purvey cried out, "O Christ, Thy law is hid. When wilt Thou send Thine angel to remove the stone and show Thy truth to Thy folk?"

The forty years following Purvey's translation were busy ones for scribes. In 1388 the King ordered that "no person should keep, transcribe, buy or sell books, treatises or pamphlets by John Wyclif, Nicholas Hereford, John Ashton, or others of this persuasion." By 1395 Parliament was so alarmed at the popularity of this Bible that it attempted to annul it. In 1396 a Herefordshire squire was forced to swear that he would neither read nor own one. By 1401 English Bibles were ordered to be burned. By 1407 to possess a copy without a license was the first step to persecution. In 1415 we read, "It is forbidden under pain of cursing that no man should have or draw any text of holy scripture into English without license of the bishop."

But Wyclif's "Poor Preachers" had aroused an appetite not easily suppressed and lit a fire that sent some to the stake. The Bible had now come into the possession of the English-speaking people to be theirs in a peculiarly intimate way. For while this

Wyclifite Bible was a translation from an imperfect Latin translation with no Greek and Hebrew texts at hand and therefore could not be wholly correct, it was made by men vigorous, graphic, and colloquial in their expression at the dawn of the formative period of English speech, when the sonorous periods of the Vulgate Latin had not been forgotten. Thus a forceful yet rhythmical style was the result. Tyndale's translation sounds much like it in spots and with modern spelling certain passages in the King James Version seem incorporated almost word for word.

Wyclif was a pioneer in starting the Book of books on its romantic journey in English literature.

The Growing Convictions of His Career

Wyclif's crowning work was the translation of the Bible into the vernacular of the people, but it was not until the last years of his life that he turned his attention definitely to this task. To see why the need of such a Bible was his last and greatest conviction we need to trace his career.

Teaching was in that day associated with the priestly office. It had been monks and priests who had started schools and universities, and when scholarly interest absorbed them the priests still kept their church positions as the basis of their living. When universities were established at centres distant from these "livings," the churches continued to be served by priests whose time was spent chiefly

in college halls. Sometimes understudies were sent to occupy the rectories and perform the details of a curate's duties, supervised by an occasional visit from the man really responsible for the parish.

Wyclif was primarily a scholar and a teacher. His active mind had been stimulated by Oxford life. There he came in contact with the thinkers of the land, and since the Church had control largely of politics he was drawn into political service because of his opinions expressed in lectures and tracts. The way to make men listen to what one had to say was to talk about the Pope or the King in relation to the Pope, and this Wyclif did in very pronounced and definite language. He was soon recognized as a man of character, fertile ideas, and a judgment which was worth experimenting with. He was placed on political commissions and knew not only what was inside scholarly books but the active currents of thought of his day in the circles of the court.

The usual method of support even for priests drawn upon for public service was by the "livings" assigned them. Service to king and country, if required, was expected on the basis of such church stipends. If expenses of travel and honorariums for employment by the king were forthcoming, they were as at the present day with clergymen merely extras, additional "benefits."

In the light of these customs let us then trace the events in Wyclif's life for his last twenty-five years.

In 1358 Wyclif became Master of Balliol and

began writing his philosophical works. The scourge of the Black Death had swept through Oxford in 1349 and so many had died that the work of the university was seriously interrupted for some time. Balliol practically ceased to function for two or three years and not until 1353 did the university resume its regular life. Wyclif's studies during this time had doubtless been interfered with so that his license to teach was delayed. Not until 1361 did he win his Master's degree.

He soon accepted the "living" of Fillingham in Lincolnshire. The next year the university asked the Pope that he might have "a canonry and prebend of York," but instead he was given the prebend of Westbury near Bristol. Thus he held two church positions and at the same time was continuing his studies at Oxford.

In October, 1363, he took rooms at Queen's College and started to work for his doctorate. The bursar's account has been preserved, which says he paid twenty shillings a year for his rooms. He was accused of neglecting to appoint vicars at Westbury while he was at Oxford, but the plague had made a scarcity of good vicars.

It was in 1361 or 1362 that Canterbury Hall was started. The first Warden appointed was unsatisfactory and in 1365 the office was given to Wyclif "on whom," said the authorities, "we have fixed our eye, both because of our confidence in thy fidelity, circumspection and honesty of thy life, and also thy knowledge of letters."

There was a stiff struggle at Oxford now between monks and "seculars." The monks of Canterbury did not wish a "secular" placed over their hall and Wyclif was dismissed, but not without a protest on his part although without avail. And "in the controversy John Wyclif found such daubing and double-dealing both in the Pope, archbishop, and the monks of Canterbury, that if he did blazon them and display their knavery you cannot greatly marvel."[4]

Wyclif had been granted a five years' license for non-residence at Fillingham. He now obtained two years more "to devote himself to the study of letters in the university of Oxford." But within a few months he exchanged this living for one nearer, in the little village of Ludgershall in Buckinghamshire, about twelve miles away.[5] Now there begins to be seen a decided change in his chief interests. At Fillingham there were poor people but few serfs. At Ludgershall the majority of the people were serfs and villeins. The Ludgershall living was not worth so much money as his first post but its advantages were greater under the circumstances, being so much nearer to Oxford. He therefore came now into closer contacts with his parish people and his natural sympathy with the common folk aroused a train of thought which leavened his scholastic thinking in a most interesting manner.

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[4]Wood, A., *City of Oxford,* Vol. II, Churches and Religious Houses, p. 284.

[5]This village may be easily visited from Bicester.

Wyclif took his doctor's degree in 1374. Before this he had aroused some opposition to his doctrinal and political ideas. Now his lectures at Oxford became tinged with doubts as to the reasonableness of Transubstantiation and the divine right of the Pope. These doubts were fanned by his observation of the needs of the people and the questionable ethics of the priests who worked on their superstitious credulity. He had probably already offered himself for service to the King and as a reward in 1374 was appointed by the Crown to the rectory of Lutterworth in Leicestershire. He therefore resigned his Ludgershall living and for the last and most important ten years of his life made his home in the Lutterworth rectory in a little village of three or four hundred inhabitants.

By this time Wyclif had become deeply involved in politics. His friend John of Gaunt was a very prominent and rather unscrupulous politician who led him on. Wyclif found himself speaking and writing vigorously against the overbearing dictatorial policy of Rome. As a clerk of the king's court he became intimately acquainted with many high-handed procedures and used his sharp-witted pen in protest, for he was a born fighter. The King and the Pope were in constant friction over taxes and appointments issued for the benefit of Rome rather than England. Soon after his appointment at Lutterworth he was sent with a deputation of seven to Bruges to confer with the Pope's representatives, but finding that his own uncompromis-

ing views were not ardently supported by the King, upon his return Wyclif retired to Oxford to write more vigorously than ever.

His numerous tracts roused the anger of the Pope to such an extent that in 1377 he was ordered to be arrested and imprisoned. In reply he began to send out his followers over the country as "Poor Preachers." His sermons were as vigorous as his tracts and soon he was recognized as the most formidable opponent of the conservative church party, showing up the abuses against the people in no uncertain light. In 1381 occurred the "Great Revolt," which was laid largely at Wyclif's door. He was accused of being "a sower of strife, who by his serpent-like instigations has set the serf against his lord." But the whole movement was an outbreak the cause of which was more deeply seated than the preaching of the Lollards.

He left Oxford now for good to stay continuously at Lutterworth until his death, defending the peasants in his writings and pushing with intense earnestness the translation of the Scriptures into the tongue they could understand. The burden of his thought was this: "An unlearned man with God's grace does more for the Church than many graduates," thus going back to the thought of St. Francis. And again: "Looking on the present state of the Church we find that it would be better and of greater use if it were governed purely by the law of Scripture . . . England is not bound to obey the Pope except in so far as obedience is deduced

from Scripture . . . To be ignorant of the Scripture is the same thing as to be ignorant of Christ. In the Bible is the salvation of men contained."

Wyclif's Last Days

About ninety miles from London the village of Lutterworth rests on a slight eminence in the midst of rolling meadows, through which the little river Swift meanders. Remains of an old Roman settlement have been found near by, two Roman roads and Roman coins. In Saxon times it was a place of considerable importance. In Wyclif's day it was a market town holding fairs regularly. It contained a hospital, the church with a fine spire replaced later by a tower, the rectory, a manor house, and the humble houses of the villagers. To-day there are portions of the old church still to be seen, although the relics shown are not genuine, having been placed there later. A few panels of the old pulpit from which Wyclif preached have been worked into the present one; the old ambry or closet for vestments and the piscina or stone basin for washing hands and utensils belong to Wyclif's day. The squint-hole is there through which one priest at a side altar could see another at the high altar elevating the Host, and the priests' door through which Wyclif is supposed to have been carried after his final stroke as he was officiating at the altar. This old church, when undergoing repairs in the early part of the fifteenth century, was covered with frescoes

INTERIOR OF LUTTERWORTH CHURCH
Showing a fresco of the Resurrection

for the purpose of teaching lessons to the people. Two of these old frescoes have been uncovered.

No authentic portrait of Wyclif has come down to us, the earliest one dating no further back than the eighteenth century, but tradition tells us that he was spare, austere, ascetic, though in his life at Lutterworth he was not so rigid in his discipline of himself as he had been in earlier life. He worked with indomitable zeal though not a robust man. In his later years rheumatism annoyed him and we are told mustard plasters had to be freely applied. He became partially paralyzed but kept on working and inspiring his followers. Probably he was not yet sixty when he died, a man really in the prime of life, putting his mature, trained thinking into the best work of his whole career. As if he knew his end was near he wrote more diligently than ever. Believing that "persecution and horrible death threatened" him he kept up a courageous hope "that the day shall come when . . . truth shall shine without let."

It is not known where he was buried, but thirty-one years after he died an order was issued to burn his writings, "his bones to be dug up and cast out of the consecrated ground." Twelve years more passed by and his grave was left in peace, but in 1427 another order from the Pope was sent "to cause his body and bones to be exhumed, cast far from ecclesiastical burial and publicly burned, and his ashes to be so disposed of that no trace of him shall be seen again." This order was carried out

in the spring of 1428 and his ashes thrown into the river "to the damnation and destruction of his memory."

To-day one may stand upon the bridge which marks this place. An old writer says: "His ashes were cast into the river Swift, which conveyed them to the Avon, the Avon into the Severn, the Severn into the narrow seas, and they into the main ocean. Thus the ashes of Wyclif may be considered as the emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all the world over."

CHAPTER III

WILLIAM TYNDALE—MASTER WORKMAN

The Background of William Tyndale[1]

ON NIBLEY KNOLL in Gloucestershire, about half way between Bristol and Gloucester, stands a conspicuous monument to be seen from the railway train. It rises one hundred eleven feet, with a cross on top, the most significant symbol of the guiding motive of one of England's greatest men, William Tyndale. Its situation on one of the Cotswold Hills commands a magnificent view extending over thirteen counties, and looking in the near prospect upon rolling hills to the east and the Severn valley to the west. Tyndale's birthplace is now thought to have been on the river bottom lands rather than on this hill, for there were Tyndales in both places. But this knoll is a fitting spot for his memorial, commanding the entire district with which he was so familiar as a boy and a young man coming back from his university studies to begin his career among his own neighbours at Little Sodbury.

Here lies stretched out before us some of the

[1]We spell the name Tyndale rather than Tindale or Tindall, since early documents so spell it, although in the only known letter which William Tyndale wrote he signed his name Tindale. Tyndale is the customary spelling and leads to less confusion.

most attractive scenery of England and some of the most fascinating country to the historian and the archeologist. The fact that Tyndale was born here and as a child breathed the atmosphere of this section of western England accounts for much in the peculiar genius which he developed.

The English Bible as it has been handed down to us in the King James Version, dependent for the most part upon Tyndale's translation, is a unique phenomenon. The English language and literature grew into beauty and excellence by slow processes just as other languages and literature have done, except for the fact that in England Tyndale's translation of the Bible was the lens which caught and focused all the rays from many sources. This concentration upon one spot through the genius of one man's mind can be accounted for only by the fact that racial and linguistic elements were welded together by the living spirit, finding their final expression in Tyndale's personality. It is futile to try to analyze genius. However, it is possible to appreciate Tyndale's personality and achievement more intelligently because of the light of the marvellous discoveries of the past laid bare recently by historians and archeologists.

Western England has been found to be especially rich in remains of an old Roman civilization which some historians think sent its currents of influence streaming far down into English history. And further back than that the mixture of different strains of blood are best studied on this borderland

of Gaelic and Welsh speaking descendants. The better known forces of Anglo-Saxon and Norman blood are here to be traced in exceptionally vivid historic events. We talk to-day of the "melting pot" as if New York and London were cauldrons heated hot in the twentieth century to receive the mixture of races in this our modern era, and to turn out a new compound to achieve something as yet unknown. But if it is true that one day is with the Creator as a thousand years it is also verified by history that the fruit of a thousand years may come to its ripe perfection in one man's genius.

Let us look, therefore, for a brief moment at three streams of creative power which seemed to bear glorious fruit in the early sixteenth century in Tyndale's English Bible, giving us strong characteristics, a rich linguistic inheritance, and an openmindedness and adventurous spirit.

If one is seeking relics of the Roman occupation of England he may find in Gloucestershire old Roman roads and walls. For to this spot the Roman invaders came as early as 43 A. D., when, one hundred years after their first appearance with Julius Cæsar, Claudius Cæsar sailed through the English Channel and up the broad mouth of the river Severn. The Romans thought this river would make a good boundary for their land and so they built a fortress on one of the hills which they called Corinium (now Cirencester) and started fighting with the ancient Britons to gain possession of the territory. Later a line of forts was stretched along the

Cotswold Hills, the remains of one of them still existing at Sodbury. One of the rebelling Briton chieftains was sent to Rome as a prisoner, but he must have put up a good fight, for the emperor was so much impressed by his bravery that he pardoned him although not allowing his return.

Gloucester became a strong military camp which they named Glevum. The four main streets of the city to-day are the same Roman streets ending at a gate in the middle of each of the four strong walls, the names of the streets preserving the names of the gates. On these streets were the large luxuriously furnished houses of the officers, with up-to-date Roman comforts of baths and hot-air heating systems. On the smaller side streets lived the soldiers and workmen. Outside the walls was a moat for added protection. One may travel over two great Roman highways to-day, the Foss Way from Exeter through Bath to Lincoln and York; one from London through Gloucester and westward through the Forest of Dean to Wales. There were numerous other smaller roads. So substantial were these highways, made of enduring cement, that to disturb their foundations to-day explosives are necessary.

The Romans seized upon the hot springs at Bath for their own delight, calling it Aqua Sulis in honour of the goddess of the springs, whom the Britons had called Sul and the Romans changed to Sulis Minerva. Here they dedicated a stately temple to her. Bath is just south of the Gloucestershire

border and the old Roman baths are still shown with the Roman terrace behind. The present abbey church dating back to Tyndale's day was erected almost on the site of the Roman temple.

It is known that the Romans shipped iron from the Forest of Dean to Rome and this road has remains of Roman milestones. Along these highways were villas where officers stopped for the night, enjoying their customary refreshments and social pleasures. At Chedworth, just east of Gloucester, is such a reconstructed villa. Wonderful remains have been found here, elaborate and artistic, showing a high type of culture: mosaic floors and painted walls, a formal garden, laundry, bakery, and blacksmith's shop, and implements of all sorts from curling irons and pocket knives to oyster openers and meat choppers. Their knives, forks, and spoons show that they were more civilized than university men in Tyndale's day. And here was cut on stone the sacred Christian monogram Chi-Rho ☧. The remains of other villas in this region may be seen at Winchcombe on the Stratford road, at Lyndney Park, and at Keynsham near Bristol.

Even before the Romans appeared there was history here stretching back to Paleolithic men, as has been discovered by remains in caves. Those were the days when there was no English Channel, Britain being joined to the continent. Neolithic men of the Iberian race are known by their flint weapons and instruments to have roamed the

Cotswold Hills anywhere from 1800 to 1500 B. C. Their nearest descendants now are the Basques of northern Spain. Their burial places the Romans renamed as *tumuli* and the Anglo-Saxons called *barrows*. Gloucestershire is full of these barrows, from half a mile to six miles long.

After the Iberians came the Celts, pushed later to the north and the west, becoming the ancestors of the Gaelic-speaking people, the Highland Scotch and the Irish. The Celts had conquered the Iberians, those who were left probably becoming their slaves. Another Celtic invasion left the name of Brythons. These Brythons were the people who mixed with the Romans, some of them evidently retreating and settling in Wales where their language is still spoken.

At the end of the Roman period came the Anglo-Saxon invasion. Three Welsh kings, from Gloucester, Cirencester, and Bath, went out to meet them, but these cities were taken. The Angles pushed west and the Saxons pushed north claiming the territory which is now known as Gloucestershire. England was then divided into several kingdoms; Northumbria to the north was in constant rivalry with Wessex to the west and Mercia the central realm. Gloucestershire, partly in Wessex and partly in Mercia, had a hard time, for it fell first to the Northumbrians, then to the Mercians and back and forth again and again, until Egbert of Wessex conquered the Mercians and annexed their territory to his, declaring himself overlord of the

seven separate kingdoms. This was in the ninth century. Then came the struggle with the Danes, which did not much affect Gloucestershire, although Alfred's daughter, Ethelfleda, the queen of Ethelred the Unready, fought against them for seven years after her husband's death, and lies buried at Gloucester in the abbey of St. Peter. Alfred's mind was on the Danes the day he let the cakes burn in the herdsman's hut at Athelney, thirty miles south of Bristol. A hundred and fifty years later Edward the Confessor was playing into the hands of the Normans.

Christianity is thought to have come first into England with Claudius Cæsar. A very old and definite tradition tells us that Christian disciples came to Britain not long after the Crucifixion and settled as hermits at Glastonbury in Somersetshire. The legend says that St. Philip, about 60 A. D., sent Joseph of Arimathea to Britain to preach the gospel and he with twelve companions came in by way of Wales. In Glastonbury he built a church of wattles, dedicating it to the Virgin Mary. The story is mixed with that of the Holy Grail and Joseph and his disciples were supposed to live in caves at the foot of Tor hill, which is crowned with a tower once belonging to a church. Beneath all the fanciful elements there is a persistent belief that there must be some historical fact. At any rate Christianity was widespread by the second century but afterwards declined until reintroduced by Augustine the latter part of the

sixth century. Then it spread over Gloucestershire until about a third of the land belonged to the monasteries.

St. Augustine brought in Benedictine monks and in the time of Alfred the Great in the eighth century monasteries and nunneries flourished. But the Danes ruined many monasteries and St. Oswald, bishop of Worcester, at the end of the Saxon period gave particular attention to restoring those of the Severn valley. Thus certain abbeys, like the one at Gloucester, had already become celebrated before the Norman conquest.

Again in the last years of Saxon rule religion languished, although in Europe, especially Normandy, there was a revival. When William the Conqueror came he put Norman bishops over the Church. Only one of the old English bishops was left, the one who ruled over Gloucestershire, because he heartily joined in the Norman policy of reviving religion.

With the Normans came fresh religious zeal and a new building era. Many of the old structures were transformed. Gloucestershire is full of the remains of Norman architecture. At the Gloucester cathedral, some authorities maintain, the original Saxon structure beneath the Norman may be seen. One can scarcely suppose Tyndale did not visit this cathedral so near his home. Here he would see not only massive Norman pillars, but the exquisitely graceful choir and the most beautiful cloisters in all England built in the fourteenth

century. One of the cathedral bells which rings to-day dates back to 1350, another to 1400. He could have seen the tomb of the Saxon Osric who in 681 built the monastery which afterwards became a Benedictine abbey and then the cathedral church. The tomb of Robert, the son of William the Conqueror, would interest him also, and he must have been told that Anselm was here made Archbishop of Canterbury. Here Henry III was crowned.

The story would doubtless be rehearsed many times of how the farmers were distressed by a bad harvest in 1258 and thousands of people starved, yet Henry insisted that a third of the revenue of all England should be given to the Pope; and of the uprising and "Mad Parliament" which met at Oxford, of how a little later he declared his promises null and void and how Gloucestershire became the scene of conflicts. Low prices, low wages, and high taxes have ever been causes of complaint. The thirteenth century documents of Gloucestershire say that a day's hay-making was worth only one penny, a day's reaping two pence, a fat goose brought only three pence, and twenty eggs sold for one penny.[2]

Tyndale must have been told how Parliament met at Gloucester in 1278 when the Statutes of Gloucester were passed because the barons were so indignant at the interference with their rights, and again in 1301. He certainly as a boy listened

[2]Multiply by about twenty to equal our values.

with bated breath to the story of the murder of Edward II on a September day in 1327 in the near-by Berkeley Castle, of how the monks of Malmesbury, Kingswood, and Bristol all refused to let his body be buried within their abbeys, and finally it found a resting place at Gloucester Cathedral where a beautiful monument was erected. With his keen sympathy for the common people he must have heard with indignation of the Parliament held at Gloucester in 1378 when the advisers of young Richard II favoured the landlords, resulting later in an increase in taxes and the Great Revolt.

Wyclif's Lollards had preached in Gloucestershire. John Purvey and possibly Wyclif had preached at Bristol, and one of Wyclif's enthusiastic followers, John de Trevisa, vicar of Berkeley, had started to translate the Vulgate Bible into English. Gloucestershire was always noted as a stronghold of the Church with great monastic wealth and a host of ignorant monks fostering superstition among the people. "As sure as God is in Gloucester" had become a common English proverb in Tyndale's day. He could not have failed to know about "the blood of Hailes," a famous relic in a Cistercian monastery, which was supposed to be a third part of a portion of Christ's blood. Men paid money to look at it and see if their sins were forgiven. As farmers in the parishes of Slimbridge or Stinchcombe his family would have been acquainted with the custom of making a big cheese annually to

present to the special saint who protected dairies. Tyndale mentions this saint in his works and he had much to say about superstitious practices and "dumb ceremonies."

Even if Tyndale did not have the urge for historical investigation which possesses the trained historian to-day, all these associations with which his native district was saturated could not have failed to affect his mind, for we know by his reference to his boyhood habit of reading that he was interested in history and by his perfect understanding of the condition of the people due to the dominance of the Church that he had pondered on the facts until he had arrived at their causes.

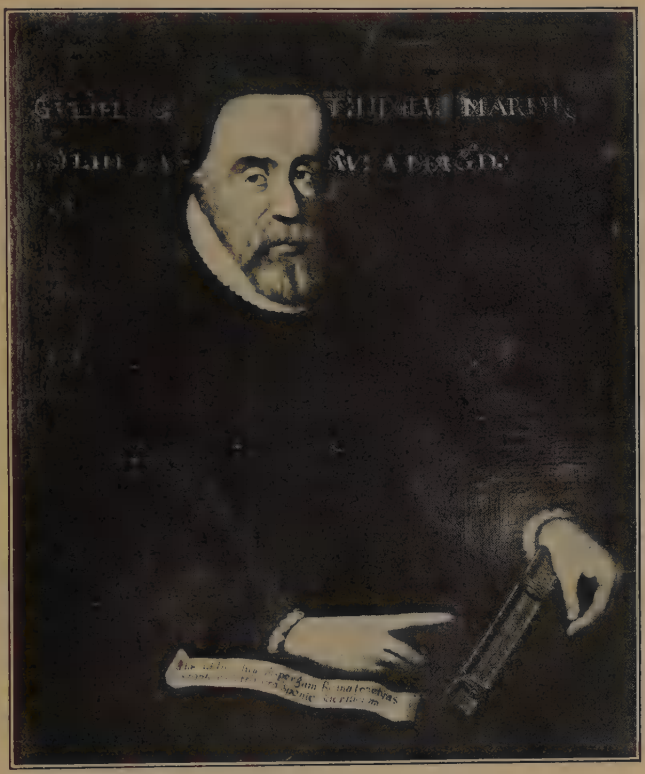
Tyndale's upbringing led him into close relations with the common folk, for his home was in the midst of farmers. If Hurst Manor, Slimbridge, was his birthplace, as seems now to historians to be the most probable place, his father must have held some superior position among the farmers of the neighbourhood. If not a landholder himself the size and comfort of the house would indicate that of a superior officer on some large estate. At any rate there are two definite historic facts concerning his immediate relatives. One is that a brother Edward became "underreceiver to his lordship of Berkley." This meant some responsible position, perhaps "local receiver of rents."[3] This brother died at Hurst Manor in 1546 and was buried at Slimbridge. The second fact is that a

[3]Demaus, *William Tindale,* revised edition, p. 24 note.

brother John was arrested and put in the Tower for helping to circulate William's New Testaments. Tyndale's intelligence found material for meditation in wider industrial and educational situations than his own local neighbourhood, in the excitement of new adventures in commerce and discovery centring in the near-by town of Bristol, in the lure of a new kind of scholarship which was being transplanted from Italy to Oxford. We find him later making use of merchants as friends and helpers, his trained mind found pleasure with scholars, his position as a priest gave him contacts with the clergy, but after all his real sympathies were with tillers of the soil and plough boys. They were being kept from the truth by the superstitions of the Church. This was what worried Tyndale.

Tyndale's home was thus fortunately placed for a rich inheritance racially and deep sympathies with the struggles of true Englishmen in conquering enemies and working out their own independence and salvation. He was naturally responsive to the needs of the common people, surrounded as his own family was by aristocracies of land, of position, and of religion.

And all this inheritance of history behind Tyndale brought linguistic understanding also. That Latin was spoken in Gloucestershire for four hundred years is shown by various inscriptions, and when the traveller buys his ticket for Chipping Sodbury on his way to Tyndale's chapel he pays for it in money the signs for which stand for the Latin



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words used when the Romans settled their bills at the baths and villas.[4] Tyndale must have realized this when he read in the Latin Vulgate the story of the steward hiring the labourers, for he translated the phrase *ex denario diurno* "for a penny a day" in his English version.[5] And why should not the tenacious hold of the Latin tongue in church and monastery be due in some measure to a subconscious racial memory of four centuries when Britons as well as all western Europe used Latin as their common speech, and the early Christian monks were conducting their services in a well-understood language?

The many recent archeological discoveries in which Gloucestershire is especially abundant cause scholars to believe that the Romans did not drive out the natives but simply ruled them, mixing with them and intermarrying perhaps, bringing in an era of Roman-Briton culture analogous to English rule in India to-day. In fact it is thought there was even then much interracial communication and that the Britons "long before the time of Cæsar were aware of the rising power of Rome and had passed to some extent under the influence of her culture." Doubtless Tyndale was not conscious of this. The rabbits were probably playing hide and seek over the mosaic floors of the villas in his day as they were in 1864 when hunters

[4] £ stands for libra = pound; s. stands for solidus = shilling; d. stands for denarius = penny.

[5] "And they likewise received every man a penny," Matt. 20:2. Tyndale's New Testament, 1525.

tracked their ferret into his hole. But the inheritance of new blood and new views may be felt through a thousand years. So an English scholar thinks who says that this Roman occupation of Britain "is the beginning of the history of our connection with the Eternal City, which ultimately introduced into our blood that something of 'the grandeur that was Rome' which has helped to send us forth adventuring and conquering over the whole face of the earth . . . These Roman-Britons are our ancestors, and, even if we allow as many as three generations to the century, they are only separated from us by about forty-five generations, and in many cases we must be much nearer to them than that. In other words, the blood of the Romans has only passed through forty-five persons in reaching our veins, and so short a sequence is not sufficient in itself to have produced much change in the nature of that blood."[6] Perhaps the influence of Rome on Tyndale was greater than the mere fact of popish dictation over the thought and speech of the fifteenth century.

But the Celts also left their influences, not only in archeological relics, remains of an art of a high order in bronzes, pottery and enamels, and in their burial places marked by round barrows instead of oblong, but also in place-names such as Avon, their word for river, and Cotswold, a combination of

[6]Weigall, A., *Wanderings in Roman Britain*, 1926, pp. 20 and 28.

their word for "wood" (coed) and the Anglo-Saxon name for "wood" (weald).[7] Their religion was the religion of the Druids, which was their name for "priests." The Druids used Greek letters and it is thought Greek traders had touched British shores. Certain customs continued to-day hark back to Druidic times. Three and nine were their sacred numbers and they had a year of three hundred and sixty days. Their courts were held every forty days, making nine sessions in the year. The court must open when the Druidic day began, which was at noon. This custom of opening court still holds and to-day we practice a Druidic ceremony with the mistletoe which was sacred to them. The present laws of the Forest of Dean hark back to Celtic days, and Celtic or Welsh words are found in Gloucestershire; for example, the combe in Stinchcombe, near Tyndale's birthplace, means "valley" and was originally the Welsh c w m (pronounced coom). The "downs" he walked over when he visited his neighbours at Sodbury were so called from the Welsh word "dun" meaning "hill." The river Thames whose headwaters are in this county owes its name to the Welsh.

Thus in Gloucestershire especially there was a mixture of tongues; for example, the "ham" in Cheltenham was the Old English or Anglo-Saxon "home," the "ton" in Withington and the "worth" in Chedworth were Anglo-Saxon names for "en-

[7]There were doubtless more trees on the hills at that time.

closure."[8] But the term "village" came from the Latin "villa." These districts later became known by the Anglo-Saxon term "shire" and the man at the head was a "shire-reeve" or sheriff, the overseer of the shire. The shire of Gloucester came into existence in 1016, close to Norman times, and with the Normans came Norman-French and a very definite modification of the rough Anglo-Saxon. About the middle of the thirteenth century the mingling of the two gave us what we know as English. But in the Cotswold Hills there is still a distinct Cotswold dialect, and Tyndale spelled many of his words as they are commonly pronounced there to-day.

And what might Tyndale have known of the efforts to translate the Bible? Glastonbury Abbey, the oldest religious foundation in England, once contained a famous library in antiquated script. A book now in the Bodleian library containing a collection of extracts from the Bible in Latin and Greek was written in Wales in the ninth century partly by the Celts and partly by the English. Alfred was a man of literary tastes and regretted popular ignorance. He himself translated the books he found into the speech of the people and brought scholars to preside over the abbeys. He centred his attention on an intelligent use of the Bible and placed at the head of his laws a transla-

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[8]A few families would build close together and protect themselves from intruders. Any visitor must blow a horn on entering this enclosure or risk being killed.

tion of the Ten Commandments. Western Britain was, in fact, the stronghold of the Church from earliest times and this must have had its effect upon Tyndale.

He also had the stimulation of lively, adventurous neighbours, traders, and seamen who were beginning to make England famous for her products as well as her spirit of adventure. It was a wonderful farming country, the Cotswold Hills being noted for their sheep and the rich fertile valley of the Severn bearing abundant crops. Nature did all she could for this county. In early geologic times the earth pressure bent the land into folds, making depressions for lakes and rivers. All kinds of rock and soil are found on the surface, containing fossils and mineral deposits.

These resources aided the early industrial development until Gloucestershire became one of the leading industrial districts in English history. Coal beds and deposits of tin, "fuller's earth" used in making cloth, a stone called "mill-stone grit" used for grinding, iron which was made into horseshoes and other products for the Crusaders, mineral waters, timber from the forests, as well as the famous wool from the sheep, fostered industries aside from farming. Clothmaking was the specialty of Gloucestershire. The exports of wool and cloth from Bristol made English merchants rich. After the early years of the fifteenth century the manufacture of English broadcloth became for a time the chief industry of the whole country. Wotton-

Under-Edge (Wood-under-the-Ridge), a thriving little town about ten miles from Tyndale's birthplace, was one of the first centres of this industry. In 1514 we find a complaint being made by the citizens of London which sounds familiar to our own generation, that many foreigners came to England and made fortunes and then returned to their own land to spend them.

The greatest merchant in England in the fifteenth century lived in Bristol, owning ten vessels and employing on an average eight hundred seamen. By a treaty made between Henry VI and the King of Denmark this William Canynge was given the monopoly of trade with Iceland and Finmark and Henry called him his "beloved and eminent merchant of Bristol." He was five times mayor and a great benefactor of the Church. At the end of this century a well established trade was flourishing as far east as Japan. And the Cabots of Bristol, father and son, taking their lives in their hands and sailing westward over unknown seas, must have thrilled Tyndale's boyish mind.

It was on March 5, 1496, when Tyndale was perhaps twelve years old, or possibly a little younger, that the first charter was granted authorizing the hoisting of the English flag on unknown shores and taking the land for the English Crown. This has been called the birthday of the British Empire. Great changes were going on; the isolation and provincialism of the merchants and politicians of the Middle Ages was giving way to an era of

wide commercial activity and the recognition of a larger world.[9]

With big industrial organization also came the power of capital and opportunities for investment; hoards privately tucked away in corners for safety were brought out and put to use. Travel was encouraged and with it came a knowledge of the culture of other lands. The spirit of the New Learning was brought back to England by student sons of wealthy merchants. But all was not clear sailing for Christian Europe. The advance of the Turk and the fall of Constantinople in 1453 was bringing Mohammedanism to the fore. Whether it was possible that the infidel could conquer Christendom was a vital and alarming question of the day. A new consciousness of religious differences and religious values was possessing the keener minds.

Thus Tyndale's sphere of knowledge as he was growing up gave him ideas of adventure on sea and land, of the power of the merchant in assisting worthy projects, of the rewards of industry, of the advantage of foreign contacts, of prices, taxes, and profits, of class distinctions and the reasons for poverty and ignorance. It gave him also a gift of

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[9]All through the Middle Ages the old Babylonian conception of the world was still held, handed down by the references to it in the Bible. They thought the world was a disk floating in an atmosphere called "the firmament" in which were placed the sun, moon, and stars, and over this "the waters above the firmament." Beneath the earth was Sheol or Hades and beneath that the Great Deep. It was quite necessary for man to keep on the top side of the disk, of which Jerusalem was the centre. A map of the earth's surface may be seen in the Hereford Cathedral.

tongues, for he proved to be a linguist of the highest order.

Tyndale's Student Days

Little is known of the actual life of Tyndale in his boyhood. But inference naturally leads us to suppose that this country lad eagerly seized every opportunity at hand to learn what monks or life could teach him, for the old historian Foxe records that at an early age he went up to Oxford. There he showed an especial bent for languages and an especial reverence for the Bible not strange considering his Gloucestershire background. His spirit of adventure was turned into scholarly and religious channels and the unknown seas he was to navigate opened the way to sound biblical knowledge.

Although little is known of his early years the moment he does come into view the impression recorded is one of unusual mental keenness and strength of character. He was a son of the soil and as we have seen he came from a part of England especially rich in the relics of history, suggestions of other periods, their struggles and ambitions, and a present life composed of many elements welded together, and throbbing with new zest for the possibilities of the future. These influences could not fail to stimulate a boy endowed actually with a good brain. He grew up in an age when mental curiosity was awaking and Tyndale wanted to know.

He evidently was a reader when very young, for in one of his books he writes, "Except my memory fail me, and that I have forgotten what I read when I was a child, thou shalt find in the English Chronicle, how that King Adelstone caused the holy scripture to be translated into the tongue that then was in England and how the prelates exhorted him thereto."[10] Whatever schooling he had when a youngster we may be sure was severe in discipline. Agnes Paston, a good lady of that time, in one of her letters hoped if her son did not do well his master would "truly belash him till he will amend." The statement of Foxe that "Tyndale was brought up from a child in the University of Oxford," looks as if a thirst for knowledge was absorbing him when very young. He entered Magdalen Hall which was at first a part of Magdalen College. It became independent in 1602 and in 1874 was incorporated as Hertford College where we may see to-day the portrait of Tyndale with a long Latin inscription to "Gulielmus Tindalus, Martyr." Magdalen College had the privilege of appointing the incumbent for the Slimbridge "living," and it would be natural for the priest to direct such a promising young student to his own alma mater.[11]

Magdalen College had been founded in 1449 by William Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester. It is thought he was especially devoted to St. Mary

[10]From *The Obedience of a Christian Man,* Preface to the Reader.

[11]This is an additional reason for thinking Hurst Manor, Slimbridge, was his boyhood home.

Magdalen because he had been in charge of a hospital in Winchester named in her honour. The college at first was to accept about fifty scholars. After a few years Waynflete removed it to its present site and on June 12, 1458, it received a formal charter, and then was erected "one of the most lovely structures of ancient or modern times," with its exceptionally beautiful tower. The number of scholars was left undetermined for some years until finally it was fixed at forty with thirty others called "Demies" because admitted to half-commons. There were to be a president, four chaplains, eight clerks, and sixteen choristers, besides servants, and a schoolmaster and usher. Vacancies among the forty scholars were to be filled by Bachelors or Masters of Arts, "fairly skilled in plain chant and otherwise fitted for the priesthood." There were scholarships assigned to various districts. None of the "Demies" were to be younger than twelve and must leave at twenty-five. Twenty young men of noble family were to be allowed to live in the college at their own expense under private tutors. This was the kind of family of which the boy Tyndale became a member. The rules were strict as to dress and behaviour and the atmosphere was very religious.

Magdalen was Cardinal Wolsey's college, the brilliant man who rose to the highest pinnacle of power, of whom Erasmus said, "He clearly reigned more truly than the King himself," and the Venetian ambassador wrote in 1579, "This Car-

dinal is the person who rules both the King and the entire Kingdom." His name is on a list of Fellows at Magdalen in 1497. Then he became bursar and afterwards Master of the School for six months. From 1499 to 1500 he was senior bursar. It is thought that perhaps young Tyndale was there during the latter part of this period, at least, and came into close contact as a youth with the man who sat in all the splendour of his cardinal's robes at St. Paul's Cross and watched Tyndale's New Testaments burn. Did the boy Tyndale find him

"Exceeding wise, fair-spoken, and persuading:
Lofty and sour to them that lov'd him not,
But, to those men that sought him, sweet as summer?"[12]

William Grocyn, one of the best scholars of his time, was a Magdalen College man. He introduced the study of Greek into England. After two years at Florence he came back as a lecturer at Oxford and was perhaps still there during some of the years that Tyndale was a student.[13] Other Greek enthusiasts at Oxford were Thomas Linacre, the famous physician, and William Lily. These men had all been to Italy and sat at the feet of some of the best teachers of the Italian Renaissance. Sir Thomas More, England's most famous literary light of the early sixteenth century, had been at

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[12]Shakespeare, *Henry VIII,* Act IV, Sc. 2.

[13]For a discussion of dates see Notes pp. 85 and 92.

Oxford two years before he entered Lincoln's Inn for a lawyer's career in 1494. Doubtless he had left behind a memory of wit and winsomeness. It was with him Tyndale later was to cross swords in one of the most famous of literary bouts. It is from More's *Confutation of Tyndale* that we know the latter became Master of Arts, for when Tyndale wrote, "In Universities many ungracious graces there be gotten," More sarcastically replied, "He should have made it more plain and better perceived if he had said, as for example, 'When his own *grace* was there granted to be made Master of Arts.' "[14]

Then there was John Colet, the son of a wealthy Londoner, an Oxford graduate who went to Italy to study at the age of twenty-seven. Here he was greatly roused by the new learning and especially by the spirit of Savonarola, for he felt the influence of Pico della Mirandola, Savonarola's ardent disciple who had been so "wakened" by him that he "drew back his mind flowing in riot, and turned it to Christ." Another disciple, Ficino, was lecturing on St. Paul just at this time and Colet very likely listened to him.

After three years in Italy Colet returned to Oxford in 1496 to stay until he went to St. Paul's cathedral in 1505. Although a mere Master of Arts not supposed to teach the Bible he soon began to lecture without pay on the Epistles of St. Paul in

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[14]Tyndale's *Answer to Sir Thomas More* and More's *Confutation of Tyndale.*

such a new and brilliant fashion that Doctors of Divinity, scholars and common people all flocked to hear him. He was an omnivorous reader of history as well as student of the Bible, a man of strong intellect but of stronger character, an honest, straightforward man to whom Erasmus said, "You say what you mean, and mean what you say . . . Your words have birth in your heart and not on your lips!" He dared break loose from the older methods of lecturing and brush away scholastic rubbish. He put his whole soul into his teaching with a sympathetic understanding of the spirit of Jesus and the apostles. He dared also to condemn much of the fashionable ungodliness and reversion to pagan license in his day which had crept in with the Renaissance. He lived a simple life, using his means to found St. Paul's school.

John Colet was probably thrilling Oxford by his lectures when Tyndale came there to study, living it is supposed at Magdalen College where Tyndale resided. In 1498 the great scholar Erasmus came for a visit, attracted by Colet. He became a close friend of this very charming, scholarly man, and wrote of this whole Oxford group, "When I listen to my friend Colet I seem to be listening to Plato himself. Who does not admire in Grocyn the perfection of this training? What can be more acute, more profound, or more refined, than the judgment of Linacre? What has nature ever fashioned softer, or sweeter, or pleasanter, than the disposition of Thomas More?" And again he

wrote, "Here I have met with humanity, politeness, learning not trite and superficial, but deep, accurate, true old Greek and Latin learning, and withal so much of it, that, but for mere curiosity, I have no occasion to visit Italy: in Grocyn I admire an universal compass of learning; Linacre's acuteness, depth and accuracy are not to be exceeded." And of Colet he said, "He spoke with a sacred fury. He was sublime and as if inspired."

Erasmus was always a little flowery in his praises, but making due allowances this was a remarkable group of men to have added their pungent flavour to the Oxford atmosphere which the young Tyndale breathed. Oxford has had other creative periods; for example, that of the Tractarian Movement in the nineteenth century, whose leaders so kindled the spirit of young students that for some time the clergy and schoolmasters of England carried with them its influence even to the country villages. Not less brilliant and definite was the influence of these scholars in the late years of the fifteenth century. The sparks struck off their anvils kindled one boy's mind, at least, till it glowed with the white flame of a consuming zeal.

It was fortunate, perhaps, that Tyndale had a one-track mind, and no taste for the allurements of social and political life. To him true religion was all-absorbing, even though the air was saturated with a false religiosity. The Bible commanded his undivided attention, although there was much more knowledge of theology than of Scripture

among both priests and people of that day. Colet was doubtless his best example of a Christian scholar, so simple and sincere was he, cutting a path through the subtleties and conventions of the schoolmen, breaking the crust of religious formalism, and going directly to the Bible. Teachers today can discover no finer illustration of willingness to help younger men to find the best method of study and the best goal of endeavour. He himself describes one winter evening when a young priest knocked at his study door, how they drew their chairs up to the fire and as soon as he was sure this questioning student was in earnest he said, "Open your book and we will find how many and what golden truths we can gather from the first chapter only of the Epistle to the Romans."

There is no account of these university days of Tyndale except the one written by Foxe. "At Oxford, he, by long continuance, grew and increased as well in the knowledge of tongues and other liberal arts, as specially in the knowledge of the Scriptures, whereunto his mind was singularly addicted, insomuch that he, lying there in Magdalen Hall, read privily to certain students and fellows of Magdalen College, some parcel of divinity, instructing them in the knowledge and truth of the Scriptures. Whose manner also and conversation, being correspondent to the same, were such, that all they that knew him respected and esteemed him to be a man of most virtuous disposition, and of life unspotted. Thus, he, in the University of Ox-

ford, increasing more and more in learning, and proceeding in degrees of the schools, spying his time, removed from thence to the University of Cambridge."

We may understand, however, something of the mental discipline Tyndale received, for in his book *The Practice of Prelates* he wrote, "In the Universities they have ordained that no man shall look on Scriptures until he be noselled in heathen learning eight or nine years, and armed with false principles with which he is clean shut out of the understanding of Scripture. . . . And when he taketh his first degree he is sworn that he shall hold none opinion condemned by the Church . . . And then when they be admitted to study divinity, because the Scripture is locked up with such false expositions of natural philosophy that they cannot enter in, they go about the outside and dispute all their lives about words and vain opinions, pertaining as much unto the healing of a man's heel as health of his soul."

And Erasmus in his delightful satire of the age, *In Praise of Folly,* thus describes the teaching of the theologians: "They are exquisitely dexterous in unfolding the most intricate mysteries, they will tell you to a tittle all the successive proceedings of Omnipotence in the creation of the universe; they will explain the precise manner of original sin being derived from our original parents; they will satisfy you in what manner, by what degrees, and in how long a time, our Saviour was conceived in

the Virgin's womb, and demonstrate in the consecrated wafer how accidents may subsist without a subject . . . whether God, who took our nature upon him in the form of a man, could as well have become a woman, a devil, a beast, a herb, or a stone . . . whether if St. Peter had celebrated the eucharist at the same time our Saviour was hanging on the cross, the consecrated bread would have been transubstantiated into the same body that remained on the tree . . . There are a thousand other more sublimated and refined niceties of notions, relations, quantities, formalities, quiddities, haeccities, and such like abstrusities as one would think no one could pry into, except he had not only such cat's eyes as to see best in the dark, and even such a piercing faculty as to see through an inch-board and spy out what really never had any being . . . These novices in learning . . . have blessed the world no doubt with a great many discoveries, which had never come to light if they had not struck the fire of subtlety out of the flint of obscurity. These fooleries sure must be a happy employ."[15]

This was theology not advanced from Wyclif's day; and so far as science was concerned the production of the philosopher's stone was still the chief aim of chemistry, the study of anatomy was unknown, and the discovery of the circulation of the blood was yet to wait. But the printing press

[15]Erasmus, *In Praise of Folly*, pp. 131, 132, 141. (London, 1900.) Compare Tyndale as quoted on p. 18.

had arrived and books were being turned out. Caxton had set up his press in England and before his death, in 1491, had published about eighty works. But even so, text-books were lacking and the dictation of lectures was the mode of offering an education. Students were in the habit of simply memorizing their notes and reproducing them at disputations.

But with Colet a new kind of teaching of the Bible was introduced into Oxford. He insisted on getting back to the literal meaning of the text itself, and with the new knowledge of Greek, students became aware that the Vulgate was not the best version. Erasmus then came, the ablest scholar of Europe. He is said to have learned how to read Greek with that brilliant Oxford group. He went home, but came back again, to Cambridge this time presumably because the university authorities there welcomed the New Learning more cordially than Oxford did.

Tyndale had seen his guiding star. The Bible itself was his objective, Greek was the way to it, Erasmus had stirred up an interest in Greek at Cambridge. Therefore "spying his time," as Foxe tells us, he removed to Cambridge. Tyndale had also caught the Christian zeal of Colet. It is interesting to note the contagion of the real Christian's life. Colet had been touched by the flame of Savonarola, perhaps he had heard him himself when in Italy, the man who "knew his Bible by heart," and Tyndale was undoubtedly fired by Colet, even if he

had removed to London when Tyndale arrived at Oxford.[16]

And what of Erasmus? Unquestionably he had a very marked influence on Tyndale, although probably he had left Cambridge before Tyndale got there. Erasmus was in the prime of life, about forty-three years of age, when he came to Cambridge. Ten years had elapsed since his first visit to England when he had felt the spell of Colet's scholarship and consecration. Colet had tried to make him into a fervent preacher of the simple gospel. But he had set it aside and turned himself instead into the paths of classical learning. He had studied further in France and the Netherlands and had lived three years in Italy, the goal of every scholar's ambition. He used Latin like his native tongue and had a marvellous gift of expression, keen and to the point, witty and satirical upon occasion. He first worked over the Latin Bible, producing a new text in 1516. But his greatest labour was in publishing the New Testament in Greek. The actual publication of these works did not occur until he had left England, but doubtless he was working on them at Cambridge. In fact one of his objects in seeking England was to obtain the use of two manuscripts owned by Colet, and in a letter to

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[16]Since Demaus wrote his life of Tyndale the tendency of historians has been to push back the date of his birth. Some think 1484 the nearest we can come. Even if we accept Dr. Guppy's guess of 1489 it would make Tyndale sixteen when Colet left Oxford. "Demies" were admitted at twelve and Foxe says "he was brought up from a child in the University."

him he said, "I have learned that without Greek one can do nothing in any branch of study." He had found this especially true of the New Testament and sought out the best Greek manuscripts he could lay his hands on. His whole attitude of mind was that of the research scholar as opposed to the familiar scholastic disputations of the theologian. He was not a preacher, neither was he much of a pedagogue. First of all he saw the necessity of getting as close to the original as possible. "If there be errors in the Vulgate is it not lawful to correct them?"

In the Preface to his *Novum Instrumentum* he thus instructs the student in the right method of study: "Let him approach the New Testament not with an unholy curiosity, but with *reverence;* bearing in mind that his first and only aim and object should be that he may catch and be changed into the spirit of what he there learns. It is the food of the soul; and to be of use, must not rest only in the memory or lodge in the stomach, but must permeate the very depths of the heart and mind . . . A fair knowledge of the three languages, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, of course, are the first things. Nor let the student turn away in despair at the difficulty of this. If you have a teacher and the will to learn, these three languages can be learned almost with less labour than every day is spent over the miserable babble of one mongrel language under ignorant teachers. It would be well, too, were the student tolerably versed in other branches of learn-

ing . . . and especially in knowledge of the natural objects—animals, trees, precious stones—of the countries mentioned in the Scriptures; for if we are familiar with the country, we can in thought follow the history and picture it in our minds, so that we seem not only to read it, but to see it; and if we do this, we shall not easily forget it. Besides if we know from study of history not only the position of those nations to whom these things happened or to whom the Apostles wrote, but also their origin, manners, institutions, religion, and character, it is wonderful how much light and, if I may so speak, *life* is thrown into the reading of what before seemed dry and lifeless . . . To get at the real meaning, it is not enough to take four or five isolated words; you must look where they come from, what was said, at what time, on what occasion, in what words, what preceded, what followed."

How modern this sounds! Compare it with the following sentences from a very recent book, "We of to-day would see Jesus, the real Jesus of history, exactly as he lived in Palestine among his contemporaries nineteen hundred years ago."[17]

Erasmus' texts, both Latin and Greek, were imperfect from our standpoint, but we must remember he was a pioneer. It was exceedingly difficult then to obtain good manuscripts to say nothing of deciphering them. Erasmus had very limited means at his disposal and was constantly obliged

[17]Case, S., *Jesus, a New Biography,* Introduction (1927).

to beg of wealthy patrons or get his admirers to do so, in order to carry out his scholarly ambitions. Moreover the art of printing was new, and printing and proof-reading require skill as any editor knows. Then, too, he was eager to hasten the printing of the Greek Testament, for Bible students were in need of it. His was the very first one available, and after it appeared no real scholar was satisfied with any text but the Greek.

Yet notwithstanding Erasmus' devotion to classical studies he advocated sincerely the translation of the Bible into the vernacular. He said he "would wish even all women to read the Gospel and the Epistles of Paul." Colet had already translated the Lord's Prayer into English for use of the common people. When Tyndale went back to Gloucestershire to be surrounded again by farmer-folk, he had caught a gleam in two directions for his life work: one was to go directly to the Bible for Christian instruction and to use the text that was the nearest to the original, and for the other he could have quoted Erasmus when he said, "I long that the husbandman should sing them (the Scriptures) to himself as he follows the plough, that the weaver should hum them to the tune of the shuttle, that the traveller should beguile with them the weariness of his journey."

Thus equipped with vision and zeal and some knowledge of Latin and Greek, Tyndale accepted the offer of a position as tutor and chaplain at the manor house of Sir John Walsh in Little Sodbury,

Gloucestershire. Perhaps his sojourn at Cambridge had broadened him in social sympathies as well as mentally, for Cambridge had never had the austere reputation of Oxford. Ecclesiastical influence was not so strong. Conservatives went to Oxford, men who hated the thought of Greek and the New Learning. Indeed it is a possible reason for Tyndale's change of university that heresy hunters were making it uncomfortable for him at Oxford. For while Oxford was free from local ecclesiastical authority, church opinion was very strong there. At any rate the traditions and atmosphere of Cambridge were freer. So early as 1342 Archbishop Stratford had to issue a drastic order to abolish dandyism among the students of Cambridge, who were dressing in fur-trimmed cloaks and tippets, shoes of all colours, and bejewelled girdles, curling and powdering their long hair, and wearing rings on their fingers.

Tyndale had gained his Master's degree at Oxford and he is claimed as an Oxonian, but Cambridge is also proud of him. He may have been there some six years or more. There were men then at Cambridge who became famous later. Cranmer was a student; and Latimer was there, heartily opposing Greek. Tyndale must have been acquainted with Bilney, a man of notably beautiful Christian spirit. But without any question it was the teaching of Erasmus that he imbibed, carrying it with him in his new undertaking back in his old home surroundings of Gloucestershire.

His First Adventure

Little Sodbury is a small village about fifteen miles from Bristol at the edge of the Cotswold Hills. The manor house of John Walsh is beautifully located with a view of the Severn valley, across to the hills of Wales. The house can still be seen much as it was in Tyndale's day. The bay window is shown where Queen Anne Boleyn watched the sports brought out to entertain Henry upon a noted visit to Sir John. The ruins of the old church are on the hill just above the house. The two handsome yew trees in front are supposed to be about five hundred years old and were probably there at that time. The present church below the hill was erected partly with the stones taken from the older one, and a memorial pulpit has recently been placed there containing the figures of a notable group of martyrs, Archbishop Cranmer, Bishops Hooper, Ridley, and Latimer, and William Tyndale.

The Walsh family was evidently one of importance in all the neighbourhood, representing wealth and hospitality. Sir John was a patron of the Church and supporter of the King, who knighted him, and he married into one of the oldest families of Gloucestershire, connected with the best blood of England. It was the custom, as has been noted, for prominent men of means to ask brilliant young scholars to reside in their houses as tutors to their children and chaplains of the household. Young

Tyndale must have been cordially received and very well treated, for Foxe says, "The said Tyndall being school master to the said master Welche his children, and being in good favour with his master, sat most commonly at his own table, which kept a good ordinary, having resort to him, many times divers great beneficed men, as Abbots, Deans, Archdeacons, and other divers doctors and learned men. Amongst whom commonly was talk of learning, as well of Luther and Erasmus Roterdamus, as of opinions in the scripture."

The large dining room where these neighbourly fellowship gatherings were held may still be seen. It is apparent from this quotation that Tyndale was the centre of attraction, fresh from Cambridge and contact with the New Learning. Foxe goes on thus: "The said Master Tyndall being learned and which had been a student of divinity in Cambridge, and had therein taken a degree of school, did many times therein shew his mind and learning, wherein as those men and Tyndall did vary in opinions and judgments, their master Tyndall would shew them on the book the places; by open and manifest scripture, the which continued for a certain season, divers and sondry times until in the continuance thereof, those great beneficed doctors waxed weary and bare a secret grudge in their hearts against master Tyndall."

This is the main window into the life of Tyndale at Sodbury. Probably he was here for about two years from 1521 to 1523, a young man in his

thirties, striking out now for himself. We ourselves entering to-day the old dining hall can imagine most realistically the arguments that resounded to the rafters and perhaps drew the servants to the peek-holes to see what was going on. Standing on the Roman earthworks just above the old chapel site we can think of Tyndale walking there next morning to meditate and think what his next step should be. He was a plain, grave man, quiet in appearance, spare in form, not very tall, poor in purse, but rich in intellectual and moral vigour. His sincerity was absolute and his affections real. He had a keen sense of humour and could use biting sarcasm when necessary and was bluntly outspoken. Later he was known to be unsurpassed in argumentation, getting the best even of so formidable an opponent as Sir Thomas More. Perhaps he was whetting his sword on the prelates assembled during those two years around Sir John's board. More later called him "full prettily learned," which was quite a compliment from a foe.

Tyndale had already had probably twenty or more years at the two great universities of England[18] and had studied under the most noted

[18]See note p. 85 for when Tyndale entered Oxford and just what year he was born. Foxe speaks of his "long continuance at the University" and we know "Demies" were admitted at the age of twelve. He left Cambridge in 1521. If he entered Oxford in 1500 and was born in 1484 he would have been sixteen rather than twelve upon entering. Foxe says he "was brought up from a child in Oxford University." This gives four years lee-way for the date of his birth.

LITTLE SODBURY MANOR HOUSE
Built 1492. Here Tyndale began translating the Scriptures

RUINS OF TYNDALE'S CHAPEL, LITTLE SODBURY

scholars. He was not so learned himself as he was to be later but enough so doubtless to impress the Gloucestershire bishops and abbots. It was a knowledge always compounded with common sense, held with humility and no desire to show off. His very plainness and directness was what seemed to offend the dignity of the conventionally educated churchmen. Indeed there was at this time in Gloucestershire a great deal of laxness and ignorance among the clergy, for this rich diocese had been handed over to an absentee bishop residing in Italy. His duties were supposed to be supervised by Cardinal Wolsey and the bigoted Chancellor of the diocese, Dr. Parker, but as a matter of fact there was little oversight and the worst practices of ease-loving churchmen were in vogue.

Meantime the wide-awake merchants of Bristol were letting in the news of the outside world. Its citizens were noted for their independence and intelligence and if Sir John was a fair sample of the gentry, there was an interest throughout the country-side in what the new era was bringing. The churchmen were beginning to be afraid their authority was going to be disturbed; they were too ignorant to refute a scholar who knew his Bible well, and they were therefore profoundly provoked. Foxe says that at Cambridge Tyndale had been "further ripened in God's Word," and so "the grudge of the Priests increasing still more and more against Tindall, they never ceased barking and rating at him."

At one of these discussions we read, "And soon after Master Tyndall happened to be in the company of a learned man and in communing and disputing with him, drove him to that issue that the learned man said we were better be without God's law than the Pope's: Master Tyndall hearing that, answered him, I defy the Pope and all his laws and said, if God spare my life ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the scripture than thou doest." This is one of Tyndale's most famous sayings and was fulfilled in a marvellous way before his death. Could he have had even then a premonition of his great work?

During his stay at Little Sodbury Tyndale translated the *Enchiridion* of Erasmus or "Manual of a Christian Soldier." It was a little treatise which Erasmus wrote soon after his first visit to England, attempting to show the difference between the false and true way of looking at religion. Colet's point of view concerning the simplicity of true faith as compared with rites and ceremonies is clearly to be seen. Erasmus rewrote it later with greater forcefulness and it became exceedingly popular, being translated into a number of languages. It contained plain, searching admonition to go to the Bible itself for knowledge of the way to live the Christian life. It also showed up the prevalent teachings of the prelates to their disadvantage.

Sir John and Lady Walsh read the book with great attention, for they were converted to Tyn-

dale's point of view and afterwards "those great prelates were no more so often called to the house, nor, when they came, had the cheer nor countenance as they were wont to have; the which they did well perceive, and that it was by the means and incensing of Master Tyndall, and at last came no more there." And so "these blind and rude priests flocking together at the alehouse, for that was their preaching-place, raged and railed against him; affirming that his sayings were heresy, adding moreover unto his sayings, of their own heads, more than ever he spake."

And thus Tyndale got himself talked about. He states in his *Preface to the Pentateuch,* "I perceived how that it was impossible to establish the lay-people in any truth, except the Scripture were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother tongue, that they might see the process, order, and meaning of the text. For else, whatsoever truth is taught them, these enemies of all truth quench it again, partly with the smoke of their bottomless pit, that is, with apparent reasons of sophistry and traditions of their own making, founded without ground of Scripture; and partly in juggling with the text, expounding it in such sense as is impossible to gather of the text, if thou see the process, order and meaning thereof. This thing only moved me to translate the New Testament."

Why was this necessary when Wyclif had done the work once? The answer is plain. The language which people spoke in Wyclif's day could scarcely

be understood now. This was the very moment in the development of English history when a man with Tyndale's equipment could mould the English language into something fixed and firm for centuries, not as a dead thing set in a classic case, but as a noble standard of speech to be lived up to and acquired by those ambitious for education.

But Tyndale with his fine conscience did not wish his presence to embarrass his friends, Sir John and Lady Walsh, and this he knew would be the case if he should continue to stay at Little Sodbury. He had been reported to Chancellor Parker, and this hot-tempered gentleman summoned all the priests, including Tyndale, to come before him. Tyndale later described the interview thus, "When I came before the Chancellor, he threatened me grievously, and reviled me, and rated me as though I had been a dog."[19] He could not stay longer in this diocese without more trouble or enforced silence which he never could consent to. He said to Sir John, "I perceive that I shall not be suffered to tarry long here in this country, nor you shall be able to keep me out of their hands; and what displeasure you might have thereby is hard to know, for the which I should be right sorry."[20] Therefore armed with a letter of introduction from Sir John to Sir Henry Guilford of the royal household, he set out for London with the purpose of seeking an interview with the Bishop of London, who was a

[19] *Preface to the Pentateuch.*
[20] Quotation by Foxe.

friend of Thomas More and of Erasmus and who was himself a patron of learning. He thought if the Bishop only knew of his training he might employ him in some scholarly work. To this end he had devoted himself to translating from the Greek into English one of the orations of Isocrates, as proof of his ability.

Thus in his late thirties he said a final good-bye to his native surroundings to find his fortunes as a scholar in England's metropolis.

Merchants and Bishops

Who were Tyndale's patrons after all, the scholarly bishops or the practical, wide-awake business men? Sir Henry Guilford received him cordially and spoke to Bishop Tunstall about him, also advising him to write a letter to the Bishop. This he did, taking it to his house himself. And then Tyndale waited, for the important, cautious and lordly bishop was in no hurry to make his acquaintance. In the meantime he found a place to preach at St. Dunstans-in-the-West.

Bishop Tunstall finally gave him an interview. Tyndale was always conscious of his plainness and lack of social grace. He wrote once in a letter to an intimate friend that he was "evil-favoured in this world, and without grace in the sight of men, speechless and rude, dull and slow-witted."[21] Very

[21]Letter to Fryth.

likely he was embarrassed in the presence of this dignitary of the court who could be very courteous, "right meet, and convenient to entertain ambassadors and other noble strangers," and very chilly and silent to a poor scholar waiting for his favour. Tyndale felt keenly his lack of friendliness and described him later as a "still Saturn, that so seldom speaketh, but walketh up and down all day musing, a ducking hypocrite made to dissemble . . . My lord answered me his house was full; he had more than he could well find (provide for); and advised me to seek in London, where, he said, I could not lack service.[22] Thus did Bishop Tunstall coolly dismiss him.

As we have seen, Tyndale had found service in London as a preacher. There was a rich cloth-merchant living at All Hallows, Bar-King, in the east of London, who "began to be a Scripture man . . . he began to smell the Gospel."[23] In some way he was attracted to go to what was then away across the city to hear this young near-heretic preach at St. Dunstan's, and several times thereafter. His name was Humphrey Monmouth, referred to by Dr. Latimer in one of his sermons as an example of a rich man truly Christian in his treatment of the poor. It is thought that perhaps he had heard of Tyndale as a neighbour from his native heath, for he had probably come to London from the county of Monmouth very near Tyndale's birthplace.

[22] *Practice of Prelates.*

[23] So described in a sermon of Hugh Latimer.

Some of Tyndale's relatives were also engaged in the cloth trade and there may have been business connections. At any rate Sir Humphrey evidently liked William Tyndale and when he learned the straits he was passing through lent him a helping hand.

Later when called upon to defend himself to Cardinal Wolsey for his assistance to a heretic Sir Humphrey wrote, "Upon four years and a half part and more, I heard the aforesaid Sir[24] William preach two or three sermons at St. Dunstans-in-the-West in London; and after that I chanced to meet with him and with communication I examined him, what living he had. He said he had none at all; but he trusted to be with my lord of London in his service; and, therefore, I had the better fantasy to him. And afterwards he went to my lord, and spake to him as he told me, and my lord of London answered him that he had chaplains enough, and he said to him that he would have no more at that time. The priest came to me again and besought me to help him; and so I took him into my house half-a-year; and there he lived like a good priest as methought. He studied most part of the day and of the night at his book; and he would eat but sodden meat by his good will, and drink but small single beer. I never saw him wear linen about him in the space he was with me . . . I did promise him ten pounds sterling, to pray for my father and mother their souls, and all Christian souls. I did pay it

[24]Sir was used as title for a priest in place of Reverend.

him when he made his exchange to Hamburg; and afterwards he got of some other men ten pounds sterling more, the which he left with me . . . The aforesaid Sir William left me an English book called *Enchiridion.*"[25]

Thus Tyndale found now and later that it was the merchants who lent him a listening ear and a helping hand, who believed in him and were impressed by his preaching, the books he lent them, and his plan to translate the Bible into English so that all could understand it. Their own spirit of adventure led them to sympathize with Tyndale's daring mood, their own response to a more simple faith and democratic religion led them to wish to read the Scriptures for themselves, their own plain common sense led them to see the practicality of a vernacular version for the ordinary man. And their desire to use their money in helpful ways led them to stand behind Tyndale in his scholar's scheme for a new Bible. He found a real friend in Humphrey Monmouth and the men of his circle. His confidence in merchants as true Christians and loyal helpers was so well grounded that once and again he resorted to them in extremity, and it was in the English merchants' fraternity at Antwerp that he found his last home before being taken to the prison from which he was led to the martyr's stake. So great has been the assistance then as today of the consecrated, far-sighted, practical busi-

[25] *Petition of Humphrey Monmouth to Wolsey,* published by Strype.

ness man as the patron of good works and scholarship.

The laws enacted to suppress the Wyclifite version and any attempts of like sort were still in effect, but permission for a translation into the English tongue could be given by the "ordinary of the place." The Bishop, had he thought it politic, might have encouraged Tyndale, but his rebuff was a great disillusionment concerning prelates. When Tyndale became famous he wrote, "But God which knoweth what is within hypocrites saw that I was beguiled, and that that counsel was not the next way to my purpose; and therefore he gat me no favour in my lord's sight . . . And so in London I abode almost a year; and marked the course of the world; and heard our praters, I would say, our preachers, how they boasted themselves and their high authority; and beheld the pomp of our prelates; and understood at the last not only there was no room in my lord of London's palace to translate the New Testament, but also that there was no place to do it in all England, as experience doth now openly declare."[26]

Tyndale also wrote: "they be all agreed to drive you from the knowledge of Scripture, and that ye shall not have the text thereof in the mother-tongue, and to keep the world still in darkness to the intent they might sit in the consciences of the people, through vain superstition and false doctrine, to satisfy their filthy lusts, their proud am-

[26] *Preface to the Pentateuch.*

bition, and unsatiable covetousness, and to exalt their own honour above king and emperor, yea, and above God Himself. A thousand books had they lever to be put forth against their abominable doings and doctrine, than that the Scripture should come to light."[27]

This was Tyndale's opinion of churchmen as compared with benevolent merchants, and the bitter experience of his months in London was verified in after years. This was in 1523. In five years he was a noted man, recognized for his ability and as a formidable enemy of conservatism and corruption. In his book *The Practice of Prelates,* written 1530, he had as good a time as Dante in his Inferno roasting these "hypocrites" of the Church. He was quite as outspoken as Wyclif had been, calling the Pope "Anti-Christ" and "the whore of Babylon," and monks and friars "caterpillars," "horse-leeches," "drone-bees," and "draff." This is the way he described Cardinal Wolsey and his satellite, Bishop Tunstall: "This wily wolf, I say, and raging sea, and ship wreck of all England (though he showed himself pleasant and calm at the first) came unto the King's Grace, and waited upon him, and was no man so obsequious and serviceable . . . and ever as he grew in promotions and dignity, so gathered he unto him of the most subtle-witted, and of them that were drunk in the desire of honour, most like unto himself: and after they were sworn he promoted them, and with great

[27] *Preface to the Pentateuch.*

promises made them in falsehood faithful, and of them ever presented unto the King's Grace, and put them into his service, saying, 'This is a man meet for your Grace.' "

This was written after further acquaintance with "the wily wolf" and the man "in falsehood faithful," "meet for your Grace." The next scene in Tyndale's career staged by Tunstall was more public and spectacular than the meeting in his study when Tyndale was rebuffed.

Frustrated Plans

What next? Such a man of single purpose always stands ready and waiting to enter the next door, even if open only a crack. The crack was first made by Sir Humphrey Monmouth with his gift of ten pounds sterling. The door was pushed a little farther by Monmouth's friends; and thus Tyndale, feeling that neither Gloucestershire, nor London, nor indeed England at all, would welcome his project of translating the Bible into English, crossed the channel to a foreign shore, never to see his native land again. But he did not go to help another country with his ideals and purposes; he went in order to accomplish something for England, to send back to her the fruit of his consecrated toil, to learn other languages only that he might build up the English language. He voluntarily expatriated himself that he might be more patriotic in leaven-

ing the life of all English-speaking people with the English Bible.

And how did he accomplish it? Probably Tyndale met at Monmouth's house his host's own circle of acquaintance, as he did at the house of Sir John Walsh. In this case, however, it meant not merely priests, monks, and friars, but men of the world who had travelled in Europe and had come in contact with the new life stirring already more vigorously there than in England. While Monmouth was a Catholic, much interested in the welfare of the Church as well as in politics and trade, he was known to have Lutheran leanings, and doubtless the men he gathered about him could talk more or less intelligently of the sensation Luther was making across the channel and beginning to create in England. At any rate from now on Tyndale was much interested in Luther. He seemed to have passed on from Erasmus to a brighter star. Tyndale was an original thinker and a man of a very individual character, but he was the type to be inspired by other great thinkers and great characters. A human interest seemed to balance his ability for pure scholarship.

It was at this time that he probably met the younger man John Fryth, who was to become his dearest friend. His letters to Fryth later reveal the warm, tender side of this brusque man's nature in a very appealing way. His attitude to him was somewhat like that of Paul to Timothy, for Fryth's earnest Christian faith and devotion is dated from

the time he met Tyndale. Tyndale was not a mere scholar, nor a mere moralist, he was a friend with a great capacity for affection. He seems to have found a few friends wherever he went and to a very few he revealed the depth of his feeling. But he was always the leader or the elder brother, and naturally, for he was always head and shoulders above the others in ability and purpose. Sir Thomas More, his enemy, wrote of him that "before he went over the sea he was well-known for a man of right good living, studious and well-learned in Scripture, and looked and preached holily." This was evidently the impression he made on the outside world, of an earnest, austere man with the one great purpose of living as a Christian and accomplishing one special thing. But as this quiet, rather ascetic person met in more intimate ways merchants who had travelled, scholars who had thought, and young churchmen who were in earnest, there was a certain fascination about him, an inner gleam that kindled a responding flame of one kind or another. Tyndale was a real, live man, not merely a translator or reformer. And so as he met Monmouth's circle of friends in the metropolis of London his personality inspired confidence and his project interested them. They doubtless suggested ways and means of its accomplishment and knowing that in Europe there were more printers and more books and more advanced thinking than in England, with trade facilities for shipping books to England, they offered the substantial backing

necessary to send him over and get the work started. So about May, 1524, Tyndale landed in Hamburg.

But still difficulties stood in his way, this time due to the stupidity of some of his helpers. Even if he had already been at work on his translation it was necessary for him to settle down somewhere in order to gather the better texts about him and concentrate on the preparation of the copy.

Just what he was doing the first year after he landed is not quite certain, for the first definite information is contained in Monmouth's petition to Wolsey from which we have already quoted. He says that "within a year he sent for his ten pounds to me from Hamburg; and thither I sent it to him." But the belief that in the meantime he went to Wittenberg to see Luther has much plausibility. Sir Thomas More wrote, "Tyndale as soon as he got him hence, got him to Luther straight." This may have been unwarranted assumption on the part of a hater of Tyndale and his Lutheran sympathies, repeated by others without evidence. But it was generally understood that "he had conference with Luther," as Foxe puts it, and Tyndale was the kind of man who would have gone straight to headquarters for information concerning a movement, just as he went to Cambridge, the English headquarters for the study of Greek.

Tyndale was charged by More of being "confederate with Luther" and by others of basing his translation largely on Luther's German transla-

tion. The first charge Tyndale himself denied, the second has been amply refuted by a careful examination of texts. He did have the Lutheran Bible before him as well as Erasmus' Greek text and Latin version and the Vulgate. These were the best authorities he could get hold of and he consulted them all, following most closely Erasmus' third edition of the Greek Testament. He was already well equipped in Greek and could speak German. Doubtless Luther and Melancthon were cordial to him, but the year must have been one of studious application to his own especial undertaking without very much time spent in visiting. Both Luther and Tyndale had important business of their own on hand. Within a year he was back at Hamburg to receive the extra money kept for him by Monmouth, but not to remain there, for it was a city without a printing press. He therefore sought Cologne. There he could get into touch with printers of repute who conducted a trade with England.

But how within those few short months could he possibly get his translation of the New Testament made and the copy in shape for the printer? Lexicons and grammars were very scarce and expensive and for the most part in Italian, and so far as we know he had no manuscripts in the original. The very first Greek grammar and the first Greek lexicon had been out hardly fifty years. He was, we know, a man of prodigious industry and he employed an amanuensis. This helper was a man by

the name of Roye, who caused him in the end a great deal of trouble, for he was not made after the same honest straightforward pattern as Tyndale. Tyndale's own words describe him as "a man somewhat crafty, when he cometh to new acquaintance, and before he be thorough known, and namely when all is spent." He says: "he came unto me and offered his help. As long as he had no money, somewhat I could rule him; but as soon as he had gotten him money, he became like himself again. Nevertheless, I suffered all things till that was ended which I could not do alone without one, both to write and to help me to compare the texts together. When that was ended, I took my leave, and bade him farewell for our two lives, and, as men say, a day longer."[28]

But this was not a farewell to Roye's meddlesomeness in Tyndale's affairs. Like all gossipy and indiscreet private secretaries he could do no end of harm to his employer's cause. Roye was not dismissed until after Tyndale had left Cologne and was settled at Worms. Then at intervals he employed his time in writing "railing rhymes" on important people and involving Tyndale because of his connection with him. Tyndale goes on to say that his "tongue is able not only to make fools stark mad, but also to deceive the wisest."

At Cologne two famous printers were secured without difficulty, for there was a sale for any books savouring of the new thought. However,

[28]Preface to the *Parable of Wicked Mammon.*

the printing must proceed secretly, for if news reached England that an English Bible was being published the authorities would in some way manage to suppress it. Every precaution was taken and all was going well. Three thousand copies of the New Testament were to be struck off and the sheets were done perhaps through Matthew, when one of the workmen in the printing house let the secret out. He was drinking a little too much to be cautious when he was overheard to hint at great knowledge concerning the conversion of England to Lutheranism. This aroused "the scourge of Luther," John Cochloeus, who was dwelling for the time being at Cologne and himself doing some publishing. He therefore invited some of the workmen to his house and treated them liberally to wine. After they were excited enough to be loquacious he drew out the whole secret, even to the way the English merchants were supplying Tyndale with money and the plan for smuggling the books into England. Cochloeus went to one of the important men of Cologne and together they influenced the senate of the city to issue an order prohibiting further procedure with the work. He also warned the King of England, the Cardinal, and one of the Bishops to watch the seaports for the books.

Thus another difficulty presented itself and Tyndale and Roye fled the city taking with them the sheets already printed. Cochloeus expected a substantial reward from the King and the Cardinal.

One cannot help being glad he was left, as he said, "like Mordecai at the gate."

Tyndale must begin over again. He went to Worms this time and secured a printer to finish the book. Probably two editions were issued, one a completion of the Cologne sheets. At least six thousand copies were finished. Probably in the spring of 1526 they found their way to England. They were very much like Luther's German Bible in appearance and many of the marginal notes were direct translations from Luther's comments. The text itself, however, was quite originally translated, although as we have said, Tyndale was accused by his enemies of translating Luther's New Testament. Tyndale thought it best not to have his name attached to the books, and just how they got into England is unknown. They were distributed there secretly for some time before the authorities were aware of what was going on. But when it was known there was much excitement.

Two Conflagrations

Tyndale's prophecy concerning ploughboys reading the Bible came true within three years of its utterance. It is remarkable how fast momentous events now occurred in the ten years left to his career. His long period of education and gestation of ideas was bearing ripe fruit—the twenty years or more at the universities, the apprenticeship in service at Little Sodbury, the months of waiting

in London. The fruit was extraordinary, and the extremities to which Tyndale's enemies were forced in their attempt to destroy it were extraordinary also. There have been martyrdoms and conflagrations a-plenty in the effort to do away with outspoken men, but seldom has there been such hatred so spectacularly exhibited and such immediate demonstration of the immortality of the work hated.

The last dozen years of Tyndale's life were in his prime, when he could work very rapidly but very thoroughly, when all his scholars' tools were sharpened to pierce to the heart of problems and to cut Gordian knots if necessary. These were the years when he could quickly master what he turned his attention to—new languages if necessary, new adjustments to surroundings and people, fresh difficulties at every turn, the most formidable opponents. This was the time in his life when the stores of native genius, packed away from babyhood, burst forth in the enrichment of his native tongue, so that a language unformed and lacking standards became the powerful and beautiful medium for the thought of a whole people. He was only a little over fifty when he died, at the height of his powers like Wyclif.

To himself the object of his work was immediate and local, and his all-absorbing thought was to bring close home to the common-folk of his own day the life of God in the hearts of men. Because he sensed in great simplicity what that life is and

where its universal inspiration is to be found, he demonstrated anew that the divine, creative Power keeps pace with life and bursts forth in new ways as men need it. But the skies first must be lit up with two great fires, the first at St. Paul's Cross, London, in 1526; the second at Vilvorde, Belgium, in 1536.

A few months evidently transpired before the church authorities in England discovered that the obnoxious translation had arrived and was already being circulated and eagerly read in secret. Some bishops with sharp noses smelled what was going on and reported it to the Cardinal. Wolsey, the time-server, with characteristic shrewdness, apparently sensed the inevitableness of a change of ideas before long and answered with Pilate's words, "I find no fault" therein. But Bishop Tunstall was not so far-sighted. His mind was closed tight to any reform. His habit of upholding what *is* rather than what-is-to-be, asserted itself violently now. Tyndale's name was associated with the book although not printed on it, and perhaps the Bishop, remembering the interview in his house some months back with the plain, awkward, embarrassed scholar to whom he turned a cold shoulder, now wished to corroborate his early judgment by stamping out any further efforts for recognition. At any rate anything savouring of the Lutheran movement was like a red flag to him and he tore about the whole ecclesiastical pasture until he got the Cardinal to call a council of Bishops, and the

Bishops to denounce the proceedings and appeal to the King, and the King to order the books to be burned.

And so when the autumn leaves were falling a big bon-fire of Tyndale's Testaments was lit at Paul's Cross, London. The Bishop himself was appointed to preach a sermon to the crowds gathered for the exciting spectacle and there he denounced the book and its author in no uncertain language, saying that it contained "pestiferous and pernicious poison." Sir Humphrey Monmouth was there and in his account of himself says, "When I heard my Lord of London preach at Paul's Cross that Sir William Tyndale had translated the New Testament in English and (that it) was naughtily translated, that was the first time that ever I suspected or knew any evil by him." The Cardinal having yielded to Tunstall's pressure in the matter made the most of the occasion for a display of his pompous importance. Sitting on his throne with his gay cardinal robes and hat and a row of bishops around him he required a procession of noted heretics to file past him to the heap of fagots, throwing on it their baskets of Testaments gathered in from the homes and hiding places of eager readers.

But such publicity caused only increased sales. The merchants found it very profitable to invest in Bibles. A failure of crops had necessitated the withdrawal of the injunction against foreign importation of wheat and this gave traders a good oppor-

tunity to tuck into their barrels and bales copies of the bread of life also. All England was keen to have a look at the book. The fire probably destroyed a great many copies of the first editions. To-day only one fragment of the Cologne section is known and two copies of the second edition. The demand was such, however, that an Antwerp publisher put out another edition. The English ambassador tried to destroy it and did succeed in getting hold of about three hundred copies, but many more than that were taken into England, for this issue numbered over two thousand copies. It was such a success that Dutch printers reprinted it once more. The English authorities spent a large sum of money in the attempt to buy up all the copies that could be found, but still its circulation spread.

Not only the common people wanted it but university students and men of all classes. When Oxford was searched for heretical works Tyndale's New Testaments were found. Anyone engaged in the service of the secret distribution agency, or possessing one of these Bibles, was in danger of being tried for heresy. Tyndale's friends, among them his stand-by, Sir Humphrey Monmouth, were imprisoned. Tunstall's chase after these copies sent officers into country homes, who led guilty readers before the Bishop, who forced them to swear they would not touch it again. Excommunication, imprisonment, and burning were punishments employed.

Tyndale was accused of gross errors in his trans-

lation and especially in his obnoxious marginal annotations. When Roye's "railing rhymes" reached Wolsey, the satirical picture of the Cardinal stung his vanity, for Wolsey was one of the vainest men in history, and thus he was incited to join Tunstall's pursuit with the same animosity. He sent his agents in hot haste to discover Tyndale's whereabouts. They tried to run him down in the Low Countries, and in Germany, but without avail. One of these agents writes, "I spared neither person, nor money, nor pains." Some of the books this agent secured, "packed into paper wrappers and concealed; and having been inclosed in ten hampers cunningly covered with flax, would have been in due time sent across the sea to England and Scotland, there to be sold simply as clean paper."

Meantime Tyndale had found a refuge at Marburg and there settled down for a period of quiet study under the protection of the benevolent Landgrave, Philip the Magnanimous, who had founded the first university of the Reformation. Now he turned his attention to the Old Testament and studied Hebrew diligently. He became expert in this language, too, although beginning to study late, for he was a natural linguist. A noted German scholar[29] tells us that "he was so skilled in seven languages, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, English, French, that whichever he spoke you would suppose it his native tongue." The study of

[29]Herman Buschius.

Hebrew was opposed by conservatives much more even than Greek, for it was the language of the Jews, and Jews were not in favour. Yet bold scholars went to Jewish teachers, and Tyndale evidently sought the best instruction he could get. At Marburg he met other reformers, some of them his own countrymen. One who came to him here was his friend John Fryth, who was a great help to him. The professors in the university were congenial spirits also. Here the atmosphere was least disturbed by opposition of any place he had resided in and he translated and wrote most productively. To mention the titles of his works is sufficient to show his industry: *An Introduction to the Romans, The Parable of the Wicked Mammon, The Obedience of a Christian Man, An Exposition of the Seventh Chapter of First Corinthians,* otherwise known as the *Matrimony of Tyndale.* The translation of the Old Testament through the *Pentateuch* was his greatest task. Except the *Pentateuch* these works were expositions of Scripture containing most scathing remarks concerning the false practices of the ecclesiastics.

The *Pentateuch* was the first English translation from the Hebrew and contained a prologue to each book. It appeared in January, 1530. In May it was burned in London along with more of the New Testaments, and in 1531 several of Tyndale's best friends were persecuted or burned. In 1529 Bishop Tunstall had been called to Europe

on a political errand and while at Antwerp tried to use a London merchant residing there to hunt up and destroy the new revised edition of the New Testament which he had heard Tyndale had made. The old chronicler, Hall, tells very graphically how Tunstall thought a merchant by the name of Packington was working for him while all the time he was working for Tyndale. "He said unto the Bishop, 'my lord, if it be your pleasure, I can in this matter do more, I dare say, than most of the merchants of England that are here, . . . so that if it be your lordship's pleasure to pay for them (for otherwise I cannot come by them, but I must disburse money for them), I will then assure you to have every book of them that is imprinted and is here unsold.' The Bishop, thinking he had God by the toe, when indeed he had, as after he thought, the Devil by the fist, said, 'Gentle Mr. Packington, do your diligence and get them; and with all my heart I will pay for them whatsoever they cost you, for the books are erroneous and nought, and I intend surely to destroy them all, and to burn them at Paul's Cross.' Augustine Packington came to William Tyndale and said, 'William, I know that thou art a poor man, and hast a heap of New Testaments and books by thee, for the which thou hast both endangered thy friends and beggared thyself; and I have now gotten thee a merchant.' . . . 'Who is the merchant?' said Tyndale. 'The Bishop of London,' said Packington. 'Oh, that is because he will burn them,' said Tyndale. 'Yea,

marry,' quoth Packington. 'I am the gladder,' said Tyndale, 'for these two benefits shall come thereof: I shall get money to bring myself out of debt, and the whole world will cry out against the burning of God's Word; and the overplus of the money shall make me more studious to correct the said New Testament, and so newly to imprint the same once again, and I trust the second will much better like you than ever did the first.' And so, forward went the bargain; the bishop had the books; Packington had the thanks; and Tyndale had the money."

The Bishop was so hot upon the trail of these New Testaments that of the eighteen thousand supposed to have been printed between 1525 and 1528 only the two copies mentioned above are known to exist. In his *Parable of the Wicked Mammon,* Tyndale wrote, "Some man will ask peradventure, why I take the labour to make this work, inasmuch as they will burn it, seeing they burned the Gospel? I answer, In burning the New Testament they did none other thing than that I looked for; no more shall they do if they burn me also, if it be God's will it shall so be." Did he have a premonition of his end, as he seemed to have of the success of his work?

Hall's account goes on to say, "After this, Tyndale corrected the same New Testaments again, and caused them to be newly imprinted so that they came thick and three-fold over into England." Some of those bought by Tunstall were perhaps

the false editions stolen from the original and put out by merchants for a great profit. Tyndale did again revise his New Testament but not until 1534. In the meantime he visited Antwerp, perhaps to see about getting his books sent across the channel. But he returned to Marburg, wrote his *Practice of Prelates,* the most caustic of all his writings, and had his famous word-battle with Sir Thomas More, the most brilliant opponent Tyndale could meet. In this Tyndale is accorded the victory. His *Answer* to More's *Dialogue* was printed in 1531. Then More retaliated with his *Confutation.* But it was a failure. "Time effectually confuted the *Confutation.*"

To us of to-day it seems strange that men should think it so very necessary to burn the vernacular Bible. To appreciate this zeal one needs to read the convictions of such a fighter of the whole reform movement as Cochloeus, who wrote, "The New Testament translated into the vulgar tongue is in truth the food of death, the fuel of sin, the vail of malice, the pretext of false liberty, the protection of disobedience, the corruption of discipline, the depravity of morals, the termination of concord, the death of honesty, the well-spring of vices, the disease of virtues, the instigation of rebellion, the milk of pride, the nourishment of contempt, the death of peace, the destruction of charity, the enemy of unity, the murderer of truth!" No wonder the people wanted to read it and the printers had to hurry to keep up with the

demand. And Foxe wrote, "The books of William Tindale, being compiled, published, and sent to England, it cannot be spoken what a door of light they opened to the eyes of the whole English nation, which before were many years shut up in darkness."

About this time Tyndale's brother was arrested with a draper of London, because they were supposed to be smuggling in and circulating the New Testaments, the brother helping William with money. These two men were set on horseback with their faces looking toward the horses' tails and the abhorred Testaments dangling from their cloaks.

But the tide of disfavour was turning. Henry's whole attitude had changed with his divorce and protest against the Pope's authority. Wolsey had fallen from the King's favour and the reins of government were soon in the hands of Thomas Cromwell A representative of the government was commissioned to hunt for Tyndale and persuade him to come home. But Tyndale was wary. The envoy wrote, "It is unlikely to get Tyndale into England, when he daily heareth so many things from thence which feareth him. . . . The man is of greater knowledge than the King's Highness doth take him for, which well appeareth by his works."

Tyndale was certainly no man to court the favour of princes or bishops. His denunciation of the Pope might please Henry but not so much as his outspoken denunciation of divorce in *The Practice of Prelates* displeased him. And so the King

ceased to urge his return and Tyndale's friends in England continued to be persecuted and burned.

Tyndale had now removed to Antwerp for several months for the purpose of publishing. He still pursued his work on the Old Testament, finishing the translation of the book of Jonah and writing an exposition of John's Epistles and of the Sermon on the Mount, the best of his expositions. A sentence from his remarks on covetousness will make clear his very forceful manner of applying the text. He mentions Sir Thomas More, who "knew the truth and for covetousness forsook it again and conspired first with the Cardinal to deceive the King, and to lead him into darkness; and afterward, when the light was sprung upon them, and had driven them clean out of the Scripture, and had delivered it out of their tyranny, and had expelled the dark, stinking mist of their devilish glosses, and had wiped away the cobwebs which those poisoned spiders had spread upon the clear text . . . yet for all that, covetousness blinded the eyes of that gleering fox more and more and hardened his heart against the truth. With confidence of his painted poetry, babbling eloquence, and juggling arguments of subtle sophistry, grounded on his unwritten verities, as true and authentic as his story of Utopia."[30]

Orders now were received from England to ar-

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[30]It seemed quite impossible for Tyndale and More to understand each other, and each accepted rumour and misinformation concerning the other.

rest Tyndale instead of persuading him to return, and Smithfield was kept hot with the fires of martyrs. Bishop Latimer had courageously tried to persuade Henry to permit the free reading of the Bible and had been disgraced, and the gentle and beloved John Fryth on returning to England was treacherously arrested, tried, and burned at the stake. In Fryth's answer to the accusations against him he said, "Grant that the Word of God, I mean the text of Scripture, may go abroad in our English tongues, as other nations have it in their tongues, and my brother William Tyndale and I have done and will promise you to write no more. If you will not grant this condition, then will we be doing while we have breath." Foxe says, "When he was tied unto the stake, there appeared with what constancy and courage he suffered death."

Tyndale, before he knew of the arrest, wrote a letter which reveals the affectionate side of his nature. "Dearly beloved brother Jacob," he addresses him, and before he finishes his brotherly advice he says, "I guessed long ago that God would send a dazing into the head of spirituality, to be catched themselves in their own subtlety; and I trust it is come to pass. And now methinketh I smell a Council to be taken . . . Wherefore cleave fast . . . Brother Jacob, beloved in my heart, there liveth not in whom I have so good hope and trust, and in whom my heart rejoiceth and my soul comforteth herself, as in you, not the thousand part so much." And in a second letter written to

him in the Tower, "Dearly beloved, howsoever the matter be, commit yourself wholly and only unto your most loving Father and most kind Lord, and fear not men that threat, nor trust men that speak fair; but trust Him that is true of promise, and able to make his word good . . . Let not your body faint. He that endureth to the end shall be saved. If the pain be above your strength, remember 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, I will give it you.' And pray to your Father in that name, and He will cease your pain, or shorten it . . . Sir, if you may write, how short it be, forget it not; that we may know how it goeth with you, for our heart's ease."

Tyndale must have been conscious that his own martyrdom might be imminent, yet it is only these few remarks of courage to his friend that give us the least inkling that he was dwelling on any such thought. At any rate it did not deter him any more than it did his Master from "going on his way to-day and to-morrow and the day following."[31] He was now living at the hospitable home for English merchants which had been established at Antwerp. A very fine mansion had been turned over to them some years previously by the city authorities, to encourage international trade. He was diligently pursuing his work of translating the Old Testament, with as much feeling of safety as he could have anywhere, for Antwerp was a liberal city. Foxe speaks of his "charitable zeal and tender re-

[31]Luke 13: 33.

lieving of the poor" and thus describes his life at Antwerp: "His days of pastime" were Monday and Saturday. "On the Monday he visited all such poor men and women as were fled out of England by reason of persecution into Antwerp, comforting them and providing for the sick. On the Saturday he walked round about the town . . . seeking out every corner and hole where he suspected any poor person to dwell (as God knoweth there are many) and where he found any to be well occupied, and yet overburdened with children, or else were aged, or weak, those also he plentifully relieved . . . The rest of the days in the week he gave him wholly to his book wherein most diligently he travailed. When the Sunday came, then went he to some one merchant's chamber or other whither came many other merchants; and unto them would he read some one parcel of Scripture, either out of the Old Testament, or out of the New, the which proceeded so fruitfully, sweetly, and gently from him (much the writing of S. John the Evangelist) that it was a heavenly comfort and joy to the audience to hear him read the Scriptures."

The merchant in whose family he lived wrote his brother, "On my conscience, there be not many perfecter in this day living, as God knows."

Of Tyndale's arch-opponents, Wolsey was now dead and More and Tunstall were in the Tower. Moreover the Convocation of 1534 had petitioned Henry "that the sacred Scriptures should be translated into the English tongue by certain honest and

learned men named for that purpose by his Majesty, and should be delivered to the people according to their learning." And Cromwell, favourable to this, was urging the scholar, Miles Coverdale, who possibly was associated with Tyndale at one time, to go ahead with the project.

But the situation was different in Europe. Emperor Charles was a staunch Catholic and fierce against the heretics. The English in Antwerp enjoyed freedom because of the independence of that city and their protecting laws, but if they went outside they were in danger. Tyndale was getting his revised New Testament printed there notwithstanding the imperial edict that unlicensed printers should be branded deep with a cross and if the judge saw fit lose an eye or a hand.

This was the opportunity for Catholic enemies in England to take advantage of the anti-Protestant sentiment in the Low Countries. A plot was hatched and an agent secured, who assiduously watched Tyndale's movements. Merchants residing in the city often asked Tyndale to a meal and the agent managed to meet him at one of their houses. He talked so sympathetically that Tyndale thought he was his friend and invited him to his own rooms, showing him his books. One day with shrewdly planned strategy the agent stationed some officers at the gate of the house while he went in to invite Tyndale out to dinner. Tyndale was all unsuspecting, "for in the wily subtilties of this world he was simple and inexpert." He accepted

and yielded to the agent's polite gesture to walk in front. As they approached the officers, the agent, a taller man, pointed his finger down on Tyndale's head. They thereupon arrested him, carrying him off to Vilvorde Castle, the state prison, eighteen miles away.

There he spent sixteen months. It was an old fortress with seven great towers and surrounded by a moat, all remains of it having now disappeared, except a few traces of the dungeons. No escape was possible and none of the efforts of Tyndale's friends to secure the aid of Cromwell or the King were availing. Cromwell and Archbishop Cranmer were not opposed to Tyndale and they made some feeble efforts to inquire what might be done. But affairs in England were very absorbing and these efforts were futile. The friendly merchants at Antwerp exerted themselves considerably at much risk but with no result except the arrest and trial of one of them.

It was rather difficult for the state authorities to get the right kind of evidence to sentence Tyndale to death, hence the trial dragged on. He was allowed considerable liberty, receiving visitors and being free to converse on religion. Foxe states that "the power of his doctrine and the sincerity of his life . . . converted his keeper, the keeper's daughter and the rest of his household. Also the rest that were with Tyndale conversant in the castle, reported of him that if he were not a good Christian man, they could not tell whom to trust." In a letter

which was found not so very long ago which he wrote to the Governor of the castle, he asks that a warmer cap be sent him, "for I suffer extremely from cold in the head, being afflicted with a perpetual catarrh, which is considerably increased in the cell. A warmer coat also, for that which I have is very thin; also a piece of cloth to patch my leggings; my overcoat has been worn out; my shirts are also worn out . . . I wish also his permission to have a candle in the evening, for it is wearisome to sit alone in the dark. But above all, I entreat and beseech your clemency to be urgent with the Procureur that he may kindly permit me to have my Hebrew Bible, Hebrew Grammar, and Hebrew Dictionary, that I may spend my time in that study."

We hope the warmer things were sent him and that he had the comfort of his books to occupy his mind. At any rate before he died he had finished translating the Old Testament through Chronicles. It is supposed to have been handed over to one of his former helpers in Antwerp, John Rogers, who made use of it in his Bible, called "Matthew's Bible."

The record of the trial has not been preserved, but if it was like similar ones of that time he was shrewdly and severely questioned and extracts from his works cited to convict him of heresy. Enough is known from references in the writings of contemporaries to show that it was especially for the belief in justification by faith that he was

found to be a heretic. Of course the anger of the Church was set against him and any amount of argument would not have released him. That could have been done only by diplomatic intercession and it was not forthcoming.

Foxe tells us that he had nearly two months between his condemnation and his death. We can imagine him repeating the same courageous words of trust to himself that he had written to his friend Fryth, in anticipation of his martyrdom. His was a lighter punishment, for he was strangled first and then his body burned. The only detail of the execution coming down to us is a single sentence from Foxe: "He cried at the stake with a fervent zeal and a loud cry, 'Lord, open the King of England's eyes!' " This was on October 6, 1536.

Thus when Tyndale was about fifty-two the fagots were lighted to consume his body just as ten years before in the same month they had been lighted to consume his Testaments. But Tyndale's spirit could not be consumed any more than the spirit of the New Testament, and he had at least the satisfaction of knowing before his death that the ban had been taken off the reading of his Bible and that the common folk of England had the Scripture in their own tongue. It is not always given to men to see their goal reached and the object of their strenuous endeavour in a fair way toward accomplishment. But Tyndale's real work was greater than he ever dreamed. It was not to be a local work for a few of his countrymen in the

British Isles, but for all the English-speaking world of the future; it was not to be confined to the Bible but to affect the whole sphere of an Englishman's expression, his gift of speech.

Translators as Transmitters of Light

Tyndale's friend, Fryth, wrote from the Tower, "I am sure that for his learning and judgment in scripture he were more worthy to be promoted than all the bishops in England." This was the judgment of a contemporary who had worked with Tyndale and knew intimately his attitude and method. He knew also the criticisms hurled against him by his enemies, not only the authorities of the Church, who gained much of their information by hearsay and influence and were using every evidence possible to convict him and to stay the spread of the reform movement in England, but in addition the mean insinuations of some of his small-minded helpers, such as Roye and George Joye.

The former hinted very definitely that Tyndale was difficult of temper, the latter that he was weak in scholarship. But since Roye was altogether impossible in character and conduct and Tyndale was only too glad to get rid of him, his come-back upon Tyndale's disposition is easily understood. Very likely Tyndale was not altogether amiable. He was too honest and straightforward to have patience with any form of trickery and too devoted to the cause of spreading the true gospel to harbour for

an instant any motives of personal gain. Moreover, his was a very vigorous mind which leaped instantly at the most pointed and pungent replies to opponents. This is quite apparent in his controversy with Sir Thomas More. It is this spiciness that makes his writing such good reading even at the present day.

As for George Joye, he was responsible for getting out the surreptitious reprints of Tyndale's work which so annoyed the rightful author. Although there were not then such definite codes concerning plagiarism as there are to-day, it was enough to try any writer even in the sixteenth century to have the translation which belonged solely to him pirated and corrupted by another. It was evidently done because of the pressure of the Antwerp printers, who saw the demand for this startlingly new book. Joye, who was supposedly a friend of the author and had worked with him, yielded to the temptation. It was the occasion of a bitter rejoinder by Tyndale and a break with Joye. Afterwards there was a reconciliation but still Joye went on in his exasperating practice of issuing editions of Tyndale's text. Tyndale wrote: "I beseech George Joye, yea and all other, too, for to translate the Scripture for themselves, whether out of the Greek, Latin or Hebrew. Or (if they will needs) . . . let them take my translations and labours, and change and alter, and correct and corrupt at their pleasures, and call it their own translations and put

to their own names and not to play bo-peep after George Joye's manner."

Finally Joye defended himself by *An apology made by George Joye to Satisfy (if it may be) W. Tyndale.* It is in this tract that he says, "I wonder how he could compare it with Greek since himself is not so exquisitely sene[32] therein." This insinuation against the scholarship of a translator from one evidently inferior and in the wrong and forced to the wall to defend his actions, is not very good evidence. Especially must such an attack be weighed in the light of what the honest Tyndale says himself of his purpose and his own conclusion concerning the singular adaptability of the original Hebrew and Greek to a translation into English.[33] Moreover, modern linguists would agree with his judgment, saying that he must have known his Hebrew and Greek to form these opinions. It was without question because of his own first-hand acquaintance with the original tongues that Tyndale so early saw the possibilities in this regard.

But one further criticism must be considered, for the halo put over a hero of the past has no part in the just estimate of his work and the following disparagement of Tyndale's originality is more likely to have foundation than the former.

Sir Thomas More charged "A confederacy between Luther and him,"[34] and specifies that he

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[32]Versed or skilled.

[33]See tract in Library of University of Cambridge.

[34]A Dialogue of Sir Thomas More.

means not only in his beliefs and attempts at reform but in his translation of Scripture, his changing the rendering of words especially those which the Vulgate had established as referring to the Church and the priesthood. Tyndale in his reply denied such a confederacy, but some would say this is not a denial of the use of Luther's German text of the New Testament. There is without any question great similarity in form between Tyndale's first edition and Luther's German Bible, and the marginal comments are translations of Luther's comments. Doubtless Tyndale had it before him, was struck with its effectiveness, and realized that the English-speaking people needed something like it. But to say that he was dependent upon Luther's translation is quite another matter, although many of Tyndale's renderings are much closer to the German than to the Latin either of the Vulgate or of Erasmus, or to the English of the Wyclifite version.[35]

A comparison of his text with Erasmus' Greek text shows without question one of his chief sources and if he was wise enough to observe carefully how Luther had accomplished a great vernacular feat it is to his credit as a broad-minded scholar and a practical worker in his field, especially since the German language is more closely akin to English than is Latin or Greek. With Bishop Westcott most modern scholars would agree that "the

[35]See Collation in Gruber, L. F., *The First English New Testament*, p. 107 f., and Westcott, *History of the English Bible*, p. 133 f.

translation of the New Testament itself is the complete proof of its own independence. It is impossible to read through a single chapter without gaining the assurance that Tindale rendered the Greek text directly, while he still consulted the Vulgate, the Latin translation of Erasmus, and the German of Luther."[36]

As for the squirming of the churchmen at the change in the translation of the word *charity* to *love,* and *priest* to *elder,* and *church* to *congregation* it seems not only amusing to-day but decidedly to the credit of Tyndale's scholarship. And it is to be noted that the Revisers in 1884 in rendering the Greek word ἀγάπη (agápe) in I Cor. 13, as *love* instead of *charity* were returning to Tyndale's correct translation. As an example of the pungent word battles that were peppering the literature of that day the following extract is worth reading, coming down through Foxe's Book of Martyrs. "The Heretick Tindall in his Bible translated *Presbyter* Priest, into Elder; and *eclesia* Church into *Congregation.* 'This word congregation' saith Sir Thomas 'as Tindall useth it, no more signifieth the congregation of Christian people, than a fair

[36]It is the revised edition of 1534 which is meant here, and it is to Tyndale's great credit as a scholar that he wanted his text as perfect as he could make it, accomplishing what Canon Hoare calls "a most remarkable" task, for "it is very rare to find a man who can throw into the labour of revision the same amount of power and genius which he may instinctively and readily have devoted to his first love in translation." This edition says on its title page that it is "diligently corrected and compared with the original Greek." He made many changes for the sake of accuracy or of a more forceful rendering.

flock of Christian Geese. And this word Elder no more signifieth a priest, than an *Elder stick!*' . . . But at least, after much ado Tindall mendeth his translation of the word *Presbyter,* which before he had translated *Elder:* he afterward translated into *Senior;* and therein he laboured so learnedly that Sir Thomas declared to him, that in his later translation he was much more helped with four fair vertues, malice, ignorance, error, and folly. 'And whereas' (saith Sir Thomas) you promised to mend the error, by translating *Elder* into *Senior,* you have as well performed it, as he that were blind of one eye, to amend his sight, would put out the other.' "

And Tyndale answered More, "He rebuketh me also that I translate this Greek word ἀγάπη into *love,* and not rather into *charity,* so holy and so known a term. Verily, *charity* is no known English, in that sense which ἀγάπη requireth. For when we say 'Give your alms in the worship of God, and sweet St. Charity': and when the father teacheth his son to say 'Blessing, father, for St. Charity'; what mean they? In good faith they wot not. Moreover, when we say, 'God help you, I have done my charity for this day,' do we not take it for alms?"

Certainly Tyndale thrust straight out from the shoulder and invited opposition from Catholics. Such passages as the following were like nettles to their temper. Speaking of the Pope and church officials he said, "Judge their penance, pilgrames, pardons, purgatory, praying to posts, dumb patter-

ing, and howling, their dumb strange holy gestures, with all their dumb disguisings, their satisfactions and justifyings. And because thou findest them false in so many things, trust them in nothing." Sir Thomas More answered, "Judge, good Christian reader, whether it be possible that he be any better than a beast, out of whose brutish beastly mouth cometh such a filthy foam of blasphemies against Christ's holy ceremonies and blessed sacraments." And then Tyndale again, "And in like manner it is, that thousands, while the priest pattereth St. John's gospel in Latin over their heads, cross themselves with, I trow, a legion of crosses, behind and before, and (as Jack-of-napes, when he claweth himself) pluck up their legs, and cross so much as their heels and the very soles of their feet, and believe that if it be done in the time that he readeth the gospel (and else not) that there shall no mischance happen them that day, because only of those crosses."[37]

And in the *Practice of Prelates* he wrote, "Thus the Pope, the father of hypocrites, hath with falsehood and guile perverted the order of the world . . . Christ saith 'Blessed are the poor in spirit'; so that the first step in the Kingdom of Christ is humbleness, or humility . . . The Pope saith, 'Blessed be the proud and high minded, that can climb and subdue all under them, and maintain their right, and such as will suffer of no man' . . . Christ saith, 'Blessed be the meek' or soft, that be harmless as

[37] From Tyndale's *Answer to More.*

doves. The Pope blesseth them that can set all the world together by the ears, and fight, and slay manfully for his sake, that he may come hot from blood-shedding to a bishoprick; as our cardinal did,[38] and as St. Thomas of Canterbury did,[39] which was made bishop in the field, in complete harness on his horseback, and his spear bloody in his hand."[40]

Now it is no wonder that with such an acrimonious debate going on every possible slur should be made upon Tyndale's authority and scholarship, nor that this persisted even down to the seventeenth century when the Catholics in self-defense felt obliged to make their own English translation, known as the Douay Version. In an old treatise published in 1617, "William Fulke D. in Divinitie" makes "A Defense of the Sincere and True Translation of the Holy Scripture into the English Tongue against the manifold cavils, frivolous quarrels, and impudent slanders of Gregorie Martin, one of the Readers of Popish divinity in the traitorous Seminary of Rhemes." And this said Martin wrote, "Let us demand of them concerning all their English translations why and to what end they suppress the name Priest, translating it Elder. Understand, gentle Reader, their wily policy."[41]

Such criticisms do not in the least discredit the

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[38]Wolsey.

[39]Becket.

[40]See *Practice of Prelates.*

[41]See Thomas Fuller's *Church History of Britain.*

sympathetic Fryth's remark that for Tyndale's "learning and judgment in scripture, he were more worthy to be promoted than all the bishops in England." What then are the modern tests by which we may judge of the relative excellence of Tyndale's work? In the first place we have noted his scholarly method,[42] and its modern tone. And we must remember that Tyndale was a pioneer in mapping it out. The Church and all accepted biblical scholarship was against it. To be sure Tyndale had had his initial inspiration from Colet, Erasmus, and Luther, but he carried the experiment further, beyond the idea of getting at the original text itself, to a reverent waiting upon the understanding of the original author's mind. And his reason told him this was impossible without somehow sensing background, surroundings, and occasion for a specific utterance. Tyndale seemed to have an intuition for this, despite the fact that his means for attaining such an understanding were woefully lacking compared with our own. For probably he did not see any of the manuscripts which are the basis of the texts and while the Hebrew text he had at hand was doubtless fairly good, even Erasmus' Greek version contained many errors and the Latin versions were quite corrupt. The earliest sources were to be brought to light much later. Moreover, historical criticism in the sense in which biblical scholars recognize it to-day was unknown then.

[42]See Chapter I and *The Background of William Tyndale* at the beginning of this chapter.

Tyndale's imagination anticipated it, to some extent at least, by three hundred years.

As a corollary to this Tyndale seemed to have a genius for perceiving the natural sympathies between the original languages of the Bible and English. He was an Englishman but not a provincial one linguistically. He got down deeper than mere local expression to the universal thought beneath, but at the same time he recognized the aptness of the right word for the thought, the pointedness of the expression as originally intended. This is the *sine qua non* of a good translator.

And this led him, in the third place, to a very penetrating selection of English words and phrases, to convey the original meaning of the writers to people using another tongue. In our own country some of us can remember the peculiar raciness of speech of some of our homely but very intelligent grandfathers, when New England was largely of early American stock emerging from the plain pioneer days of subduing the rocky soil, or again such telling speech as greeted us out West just after the cowboy and mining stages of development were giving place to culture.

England's cultural progress cannot perhaps be so definitely marked off, for it represents the progress of Western civilization as a whole as well as its own peculiar national advancement. Moreover, it is beginning to be realized that England even in mediæval times was not altogether provincial or

crude. Yet there was much of that unmistakable vitality of speech in Tyndale's English which is a gift of the gods and not learned in schools, which comes from the pressure of circumstances upon great minds who dare to express themselves pointedly. This results in fitting and compelling rather than conventional language. Such speech is found in Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, when his personality had been pressed on every side by great throbbing issues in the development of our country. His native genius seized all the means at hand for concise and adequate expression and lo, a marvel ensued, an untutored man became the teacher of the whole people. So with Tyndale, although schooled in the universities and able to read eight tongues, his education instead of confining him within bounds was only a means for moulding speech like plastic clay and behold, living truth and beauty were made incarnate. This is the great reason why the words and phrases of his translation have stuck in the minds of English-speaking people for four centuries.

A fourth test of the excellence of Tyndale's translation is his marvellous appreciation and reproduction of the rhythm of the original Hebrew. And here we must remember that the Greek of the New Testament also reflects the native feeling of the Hebrew for balance, imagery, and conciseness of expression. The Lord's Prayer, the Beatitudes, and the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians are

Hebrew poems in a Greek garb. Present-day advocates of free-verse, who are breaking loose from conventional poetic forms, pride themselves on similarity of principle with the great Hebrew poets,[43] and there is similarity in that imagery and rhythm of thought are outstanding characteristics of biblical literature. One of our best critics of American literature says, "East and West met long ago in the matchless phrases translated from Hebrew and Greek and Latin into the English Bible; and the heart of the East there answers to the heart of the West as in water face answereth to face. That the colonizing Englishmen of the seventeenth century were Hebrews in spiritual culture, and heirs of Greece and Rome without ceasing to be Anglo-Saxon in blood, is one of the marvels of the history of civilization, and it is one of the basal facts in the intellectual life of the United States of to-day."[44]

Again the same writer attributes this largely to Tyndale, "The Hebrew lyric, in its diction, its rhythmical patterns, and above all in its flaming intensity of spirit, bears the marks of racial purity, of mental vigour and moral elevation. It became something even more significant, however, than the spiritual expression of a chosen race.... It moulded century after century the liturgy of the European world. It influenced Tyndale's English version of

[43]See Wilkinson, M., *New Voices* p. 83, "Images and Symbols."
[44]Bliss Perry, *The American Mind,* p. 38.

the Psalms[45] and this has affected the whole vocabulary and style of the modern English lyric. There is scarcely a page of the *Oxford Book of English Verse* which does not betray in word or phrase the influence of the Hebrew Psalter."[46]

It is very interesting that, while the principles of the structure of Hebrew poetry were not discovered until Bishop Lowth appeared in the middle of the eighteenth century, yet William Tyndale a hundred and fifty years before responded so naturally to their essential qualities, as he read his Bible in Hebrew and Greek, that his English fell perforce into rhythmical phrases. Probably also his knowledge of Latin helped him, for mediæval Latin had a singularly sonorous quality and scholars spoke Latin then as a living language. "Mediæval sermons, for all the defects of transmission, offer ample and various demonstrations of the force and beauty of mediæval Latin."[47] We must remember that Tyndale was a reader of the books of Erasmus and the Latin of Erasmus was delightfully perfect.

The uniqueness of Tyndale's work should not be overestimated. Doubtless if he had not produced an English translation of Scripture someone else would have done so soon. The times were ripe for it. The reform movement could not be kept out

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[45]As we have seen, Tyndale did not get so far as the Psalms in his translation. It was Coverdale's version which entered into the Prayer Book and a revision of that which found its place in the King James Bible.

[46]Bliss Perry, *A Study of Poetry*, p. 308.

[47]Baldwin, C. S., *Mediæval Rhetoric and Poetic.*

of England and that necessarily carried with it vernacular translations of the Bible. Other countries were far ahead of England in this. Even before Luther's version of the New Testament in 1522 Germany had seventy-two partial versions of the Bible and fifty complete translations, of which fourteen editions had been printed in High German and three in Low German. The first complete German Bible was printed in 1466, the first Italian in 1471 and in French in 1487. Portions were to be had in Dutch early in the fifteenth century.[48]

In England, too, Richard Rolle's translation of the Psalms seems to have been rather well disseminated and there were other vernacular versions of special sections of the Bible. The Wyclifite Bible was probably in the possession of some of the well-to-do families, those who had had influence with church authorities so that license for ownership had been obtained without suspicion of heresy. In the early part of the fifteenth century such suspicions were rife and had stopped the popularity of the Lollard version. An anti-Lollard poem against a prominent gentleman by the name of Oldcastle ran thus:

> "It is unkindly for a knight,
> That should the Kinge's castle keep,
> To babble the Bible day and night
> In resting time when he should sleep."

[48]For these dates see Workman, *John Wyclif*, Vol. II, p. 191, Lindsay, *History of the Reformation*, Vol. I, p. 149, Deansley, M., *The Lollard Bible*, p. 117. The *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia*, Article "Versions."

Oldcastle was tried for heresy in 1414 and executed in 1417. A century later in Tyndale's day indifference to the Wyclifite Bible and ignorance of it had set in, for Wyclif was ahead of his time. "Just as the country was not ripe to receive his teaching, the English language was not yet sufficiently mature to welcome as its own Wyclif's gift of a vernacular version."[49] Therefore doubtless by Tyndale's time the Wyclifite Bible was very little read, the language being old-fashioned and too closely dependent on Latinisms, and the text in manuscript form.[50] It seems quite certain that Tyndale did not know of it; he himself says he "neither was holpen with English of any that had interpreted the same, or such like thing in the Scripture before time."[51]

The whole Bible would have been translated into the vernacular had not Tyndale done it, but it is questionable whether anyone could have done it so well. He was the man of the hour. Yet creative genius does not know hours and minutes, it only knows opportunities. Here was the opportunity and Tyndale seized it. His translation is said to have had a greater influence on the English language and civilization than any other vernacular Bible has had on any other nation, for both civilization and language were then in just the stage to

[49]Workman, p. 200.

[50]See Miss Deansley's discussion, p. 334 f., and Workman, Vol. I, Ch. on "Bible."

[51]See his *Address to the Reader, Cologne Fragment* (*Grenville Ms*).

be formed by such a vigorous expression of Holy Writ.

Tyndale the scholar reflects Tyndale the man, plain, humble, honest, thorough, very much to the point; but beneath a homely exterior there was a richness of feeling and a sympathetic, poetic response to things sublime. "There are no black spots in his life, which it has been necessary for his biographers to whitewash."[52] This stern, determined man was devoted to the truth and to the gospel. He gave himself without stint in keen intellectual endeavour, but he reveals to those who look close for it a tender side, a love, not only kindling his mind into brilliancy but burning at the heart with a quiet, clean white light of sympathetic understanding. His was preëminently a work *con amore*. Because of this the original spirit of the Hebrew writers, flashing across the centuries, was caught by the spirit of Tyndale and transmitted in another tongue as a shining light to future generations.

His work so far as the Bible is concerned has not since been approached in scholarly daring and influence. He himself modestly apologized for "the rudeness of the work," while we exalt it as the incomparable production of English literature. It was the moulding of a living medium to express a vital force. It was blazing the trail for scholarly method to be pursued by all who came after him. And this book was to permeate the whole life of a

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[52]Guppy, Henry, *William Tindale and the Earlier Translators of the Bible into English.*

people with its beautiful, majestic and forceful diction as well as the truth behind it. "Its influence is everywhere; it has crept into our language, it has crept into our literature and it has crept into the very life of the people; so that we might just as well try to remove the leaven from a pan of meal after it has commenced to work, as hope to eradicate the influence of the Bible and its teaching from the English-speaking lands."[53]

William Tyndale is in our English sun, for the rays that he caught and sent on have been powerful enough to reach the farthest corner of the English-speaking world.

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[53]Guppy, Henry.

CHAPTER IV

BIBLES BETWEEN 1535 AND 1611

The Times

THE sixteenth century after Tyndale's death presents an entirely different aspect so far as the English Bible is concerned. With both the Wyclifite and the Tyndale versions, originality and a passionate primary devotion to the truth of the Bible itself had been especially apparent. No ulterior political ends were sought, although these translations played a decided part in political strife and change. But now with two exceptions, the Geneva and Taverner Bibles, the great motive behind the numerous versions put forth was to serve the sovereign purpose of the King or of ecclesiastical authorities.

Henry turned Protestant that he might secure a divorce from Catharine and marry Anne of Boleyn. The vernacular Bible was a very efficient means in the protest. In the British Museum is an exquisite copy of Tyndale's revised New Testament of 1534, done on vellum and illuminated, with gilded edges adorned with the words Anna Angliae Regina. This gift to the Queen was a tribute to her support of Tyndale's cause. He did not approve of the divorce,

as his writings show, but when the deed was done he was grateful for the Queen's patronage of his life work and intercession for his persecuted followers. Even before he died Convocation had petitioned for a royal sanction of some acceptable English version. It has been estimated that within the ten years between the first edition of his New Testament and his death, about fifty thousand copies had been printed and distributed. Because of the great improvement of the last edition over the first it is thought that had he lived Tyndale would have gone on raising continually the standard of translation. As it is, about eighty per cent. of the classic King James New Testament as well as of the Revised Version is Tyndale's.

Yet the times were not quite ripe for the government to come out openly and authorize Tyndale's work. There had been too much said and done for such a complete and sudden right-about-face. It is true Henry's imperious disposition had enacted many violent changes. He changed his wife whenever he pleased. He changed his church to suit his convenience. He removed his prime minister just as readily from the Cardinal's seat to the Tower. Yet the people as a mass could not be manipulated quite so quickly. He tried it very drastically with a sweeping iconoclasm in church and monastery and confiscation of Roman Catholic property. But the people rose in riot and reaction and the last eight years of his life saw a Catholic protest which Henry could not stem.

Sir Thomas More, who succeeded Wolsey, did not long retain his seat as Lord Chancellor. To the Tower he went also. But the same reproach did not apply to him as to Wolsey, who pathetically declared before he died that had he served God as diligently as he had served the King his fate would have been different. Sir Thomas was sincere and sincerely stood for the Catholic faith. This marked his doom. Thomas Cromwell, now in power, had learned the political ropes in Wolsey's service, skillfully climbing up from very humble origin, being the son of a blacksmith. He was astute, witty, unscrupulous, Machiavellian in his tactics. He has been described as "the great patron of ribaldry, and the protector of the ribalds, of the low jester, the filthy ballad-monger, the ale-house singers, and 'hypocritical mockers in feasts,' in short, of all the blasphemous mocking and scoffing which disgraced the Protestant party at the time of the Reformation."[1] He certainly was not religious in any true sense of the term. Once started on his climb he had a rapid rise. In 1533 he was made Chancellor of the Exchequer, in 1534 the King's chief secretary, in the same year Master of the Rolls and the King's vice-regent. In 1539 he was Lord Great Chamberlain, in 1540 Earl of Essex. Then the Tower welcomed him also, where he wrote to his King, "Most gracious prince, I cry mercy, mercy, mercy!"

Under him the persecution of Catholics was carried on to suit his prince and under him Archbishop

[1]See Maitland, S. R., *Essays on the Reformation.*

Cranmer was a tool. Between them they steered the government ship through the first turbulent Protestant waters. Cranmer it was who gave the verdict of divorce against Catherine and was most subservient to Henry. Henry made him change his ancestral arms from three cranes to three pelicans to show "that he ought to be ready to shed his blood for his young ones brought up in the faith of Christ." When Henry died Cranmer attended him and was named by him as one of the protectorate for the young Edward. It was he who crowned the boy king. He was not so totally lacking in character as Cromwell, although he trimmed his sails to suit his sovereign. Yet he did have some principle and he stood by Cromwell in prison. He was an opportunist, trying to ride the waves and conciliate his foes. Yet he was martyred soon after his friends Ridley and Latimer, who had been the King's chaplains, and with them his name is commemorated in the Tyndale pulpit in the church of Little Sodbury.

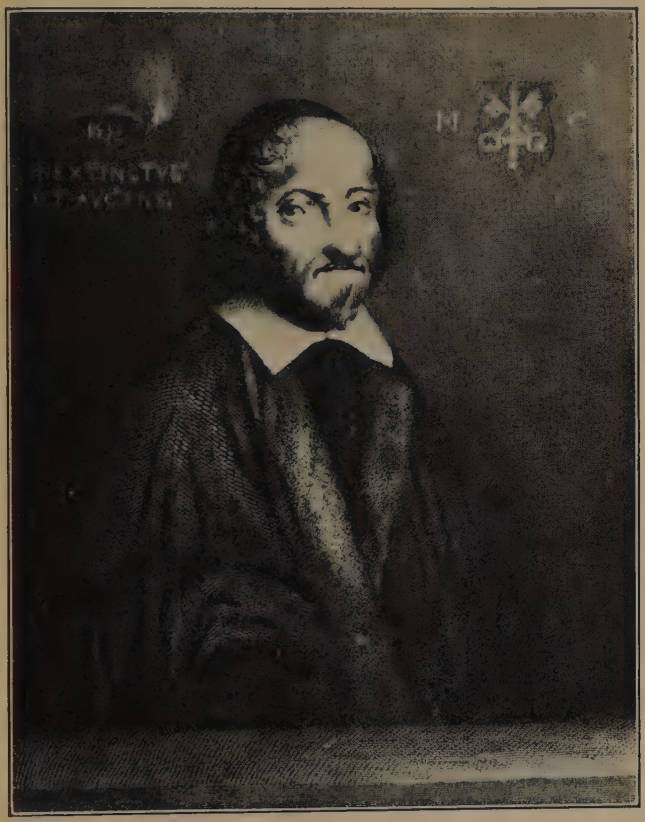
To his honour he nobly withdrew the recantation he had made, with this famous declaration to the people, "And now I come to the great thing which so troubleth my conscience, more than anything I ever did or said in my whole life, and that is the setting abroad of writings contrary to the truth, which now here I renounce and refuse, as things written with my hand contrary to the truth which I thought in my heart, and written for fear of death, and to save my life, if it might be . . . And

for as much as my hand offended, writing contrary to my heart, my hand shall first be punished therefor; for, may I come to the fire, it shall be first burned." And so at the stake he thrust his right hand into the flame crying, "This hand hath offended." Cranmer's martyrdom occurred in 1556.

Coverdale's Bible

Miles Coverdale was born, probably in 1488, in the county made famous by Wyclif. His birthplace is thought to have been a little village called Coverdale in Yorkshire, near Richmond. Like Tyndale he had the reputation of being studious from a child. Finally he found himself pursuing philosophy and theology at Cambridge. He became a priest in 1514 and entered the order of Austin friars at Cambridge.

This order had a famous prior by the name of Robert Barnes, who exercised great spiritual influence over Coverdale. He had been much interested in Lutheranism and made a notable answer to Wolsey when the Cardinal questioned him as to heresy. "Will you be ruled by us and we will do all things for your honesty, and for the honesty of the university?" said Wolsey, "I thank your grace," replied Barnes, "for your good will, I will stick to the holy scripture and to God's book, according to the simple talent that God hath lent me." "Well," said Wolsey, "thou shalt have thy learn-



MILES COVERDALE

ing tried to the uttermost, and thou shalt have the law." He was therefore brought before a conclave of bishops in 1526 for examination, Coverdale assisting him to prepare his answers. He was given the option of retracting or burning. Hesitating and almost deciding to burn, at last he retracted before the Cardinal and a large congregation, while he was required to throw faggots on the pile that was to consume other martyrs that day. Then kneeling he was absolved by Bishop Fisher.

Coverdale also became a visitor at Sir Thomas More's house, Sir Thomas having been made high steward of Cambridge University in 1526, and soon he became acquainted with Thomas Cromwell, who saw in him a man most usable for his purposes. Thus backed by so powerful a friend Coverdale started on the career that made him famous, that of a translator of the Bible. He wrote to Cromwell, "Nothing in the world I desire but books; they once had I do not doubt but Almighty God shall perform that in me which He of His most plentiful favour and grace hath begun."

We do not know the exact moves Coverdale made at this time except that in the year 1528 he was preaching in the county of Suffolk against Catholic practices, the mass, confession, and image-worship, and in 1529, according to the historian Foxe, he saw Tyndale at Hamburg and helped him on his *Pentateuch,* but this latter seems doubtful for Coverdale was short on Hebrew. Indeed he

was not at all a linguistic scholar in the sense in which Tyndale was. Compared with him he only scratched the surface of foreign languages, although he manipulated his mother tongue most facilely with a graceful touch and a musical ear.

We do know, however, that in the winter of 1535 there arrived in London unbound sheets of a complete Bible with a dedication to the King signed by his "humbel subjecte and dayle oratour, Myles Coverdale." This had been printed in Zurich or Antwerp but arrived without the printer's name or the place of printing. In London one James Nicholson bound it up, tearing off the original title page, which read "translated out of Douche and Latyn into Englishe," and substituting the words "faithfully translated into Englyshe." The reason seems obvious, for *Douche* meant *German* and the English public were not yet quite ready to declare themselves for German reform. Yet it may have been that Nicholson, the publisher, simply wished to save space. At any rate the first title shows what Coverdale had been doing, not translating from the original Hebrew and Greek but from the German and the Latin so easily at hand and in which he was pretty well versed. The text also shows his conciliatory motive, for its sources were both Lutheran and Catholic, while it tactfully omits all Lutheran comments and retains the cherished ecclesiastical words with the one exception of *congregation* for *church*.

The "Matthew's Bible"

It was not, however, until the second edition of this version of Coverdale in 1537 that it received the King's sanction, together with another known as Matthew's Bible, which was actually Tyndale's entrusted to his friend John Rogers while Tyndale was in prison. This man put his hand to the task of re-doing Tyndale's text and presenting it to the public without the stigma of the great translator's name. Rogers' work bears the marks of literary ability. He filled out Tyndale's text with Coverdale's translation from the book of Ezra through the Old Testament including the Apochrypha, now for the first time set off by itself, for Tyndale had not had time to complete his work on the Old Testament. He also added a concordance which he translated from the French Bible, a calendar, an almanac, and an *Exhortation to Study of Scripture* written by himself.

This Bible was inscribed to "The most noble and gracyous Prynce Kyng Henry the Eyght" by "Thomas Matthew." It is supposed that Rogers, thinking it best not to affix to it either Tyndale's name or his own because of heretical associations, used instead the name of either the publisher or a patron. The foreign printer who started the work is not known, London publishers evidently finishing it from the beginning of the book of Isaiah. The initials of these publishers as well as initials of Tyndale and Rogers are found on certain pages, and

the typesetting of this first edition shows a composite character. It was welcomed immediately by Cranmer, who wrote a letter to Cromwell praising it and urging that the King license it "until such time that we bishops shall set forth a better."

Thus the year 1537 sees Coverdale's edition "set forth with the King's most gracious license" and the Matthew's Bible authorized also.[2]

Since the Matthew's Bible was the version used as the foundation of future revisions, it is well to consider just what part Coverdale played in it, and what was his spirit, motive, and genius. Coverdale was not a great translator in the sense of digging deep into the structure and meaning of the original, but he had great ability in smoothing the rough corners left by others and polishing the surfaces of what had already been done. He also had a real gift in melodious expression. The rhythms of his north country dialect stayed with him even after his speech had become cosmopolitan and this added much to his ability as a translator. Indeed it was just here where his chief excellence lay, as is testified by the Psalter of the Prayer Book, which is for the most part Coverdale's translation and "excels in the music of its phrasing." It is said that Coverdale's nature may be indicated by the fact that it is he who introduced into the language the expressions 'loving kindness' and 'tender mercy.'

[2]This is according to the statement of William Fulke, the sixteenth century writer who defended the English translation of the Bible so vigorously against the attacks of Gregory Martin, the Catholic.

Tindale's nature was masculine, Coverdale's of a more feminine cast, with a more flexible and musical rhythm than Tindale's."[3]

Harmony, grace, and beauty, then, were Coverdale's contribution to the pointed, pungent, heart-searching phrases of Tyndale, a rare combination, indeed, and we inheritors of our English speech through the English Bible have reason to be grateful for this providential amalgamation of style.

As to Coverdale's spirit in the undertaking, he was not a fighter as was Tyndale, but mild and gentle, fond of books and literary pursuits and really zealous for the new truth of the reformers. He was not a leader, but rather one to be led, peaceful of disposition and wishing to smooth out difficulties so far as possible. This is apparent in his first translation, his use of sources, his choice of words, his omission of controversial comments, as well as in his *Prologue unto the Christian Reader.* Here he very humbly says: "Considering how excellent knowledge and learning an interpreter of Scripture ought to have in the tongues, and pondering also my own insufficiency therein, and how weak I am to perform the office of a translator, I was the more loath to meddle with this work. Notwithstanding, when I considered how great pity it was that we should want it so long, and called to my remembrance the adversity of them which were not only of ripe knowledge, but would also with all

[3]Dr. Cook in *Cambridge History of English Literature,* Vol. IV, Ch. II.

their hearts have performed that they began if they had not had impediment; considering, I say, that by reason of their adversity it could not so soon have been brought to an end as our most prosperous nation would fain have had it; these and other reasonable causes considered, I was the more bold to take it in hand . . . But to say the truth before God, it was neither my labour nor desire to have this work put in my hand."

Here he very apparently reveals the power behind him pushing him on. His conciliatory nature is evident also in an edition of 1538 of a parallel Latin and English New Testament, Coverdale's English having followed the Latin Vulgate. But none of his Bibles were very accurate, for he was more of a compiler and editor than a translator.

The Great Bible (Cromwell's and Cranmer's)

Miles Coverdale was just the man for Cromwell's purposes. Even before Tyndale's death Cromwell, astutely sensing the need of an authorized version of Scripture in the vernacular to further the new movement in England, had set Coverdale at the task of preparing one. Archbishop Cranmer had already suggested to Henry that it would be better to shift the argument for divorce from the discussion of the authority abiding in pope or king to scriptural standards, proving that Catharine should be divorced because she had been the wife of Henry's brother. "This man,"

the King responded, "has got the right sow by the ear!" Therefore when Convocation met in 1534 Cranmer was instructed as presiding officer to hand on to the King a petition for an English version. Perhaps this never actually reached him for another petition was necessary in 1536. In the meantime Coverdale's translation appeared in 1535, and then the Matthew's Bible.

It is a very striking fact that within a year of the martyrdom of Tyndale and ten years of the burning and denouncing of his first New Testament at St. Paul's Cross, an English Bible so much of which were his exact words should be accepted, praised, and sent abroad over the land. But it was because it was incognito. The name Matthew's Bible was a blind, as we have seen, and perhaps Cromwell knew something of the danger. At any rate he felt nothing had yet been produced which was quite satisfactory and so he set Coverdale at work upon the Great Bible. It was to be done in the grand style. No English printer was equal to producing a de luxe edition such as Cromwell planned. Therefore he sent Coverdale to Paris and made it possible for him to do more thorough work than before. Now he had at his disposal the Complutensian Polyglot, a work containing Hebrew, Greek and Latin texts, with Hebrew and Greek grammars and a Hebrew dictionary. He also was to have the help of one Richard Grafton, and the French King had given a special license to a Paris printer to undertake the task.

But the inquisition still held sway and suspicion was directed to the printing house. An order of confiscation was issued and "four great dry vats" of sheets were sold as waste-paper to pack hats in. But Coverdale had sent some of them already to England and those confiscated were bought back by Cromwell's agents and sent secretly to London. The presses, type, and compositors were also transferred to the same place and the book was finished quite magnificently, with a notable frontispiece, a Holbein engraving of King Henry on his throne handing the Bible to his subordinates. Cromwell stands on one side of him and Cranmer on the other, they in turn passing the Bible on to the bishops. The people stand at the foot of the page and the Lord looks down on the King from above. It was a large folio volume and because of this and its elegance it was called the Great Bible. The first edition is called "Cromwell's Bible" and Cromwell had much to do with its publication. His own beautiful illuminated copy on vellum can be seen in the library of St. John's College, Cambridge. The edition known as "Cranmer's Bible" is the second edition of the Great Bible and was printed in 1540; to it was attached a prologue written by the Archbishop, but he himself had nothing to do with the actual translation.

The Great Bible immediately became the authorized version and two years saw at least seven imprintings. Cranmer was a master of English prose, and his elaborate preface found in the second

¶ The Byble in
Englyshe, that is to saye the con-
tet of al the holy scrypture, both
of ye olde, and newe testamet, with
a prologe therinto, made by
the reuerende father in
God, Thomas
archbysshop
of Cantor
bury.
¶ This is the Byble apoynted
to the vse of the churches.
¶ Imprinted by Edward whytchurche
Cum priuilegio ad imprimendum solum.
M.D.xl.

TITLE PAGE OF THE GREAT BIBLE

edition and the fourth bore the sanction of Bishop Tunstall, Tyndale's persistent persecutor. A copy was ordered placed in each church that "parishioners may most commodiously resort to the same and rede yt." So popular did it become that public discussions over it became excited and disturbing, and an edict was necessary forbidding "any open reasoning in your taverns or alehouses." The historian Strype says, "Everybody that could bought the book, or busily read it, or got others to read it to them." An old paper of that time found in the public archives says, "Englishmen have now in hand, in every church and place, the Holy Bible in their mother tongue, instead of the old fabulous and fantastical books of the Table Round, Lancelot du Lake, Bevis of Hampton, Guy of Warwick, etc., and such other, whose impure filth and vain fabulosity the light of God has abolished utterly."

The main source book for this edition was the Matthew's Bible and that, as we have seen, was chiefly Tyndale's with Coverdale's supplementary material.

Taverner's Bible

This same year of 1539 produced another Bible, not given much attention, but of some scholarly merit. A good Greek scholar, an Oxford man and a lawyer, by the name of Richard Taverner, who was associated with Fryth, Tyndale's friend, became especially interested in translating the New Testament. For the Old Testament he followed

the Matthew's Bible. Two editions of his work were published, but the Great Bible took precedence and Taverner's Bible exercised little influence except for a few happy renderings such as *parable* for *similitude* which crept into the King James version.

Coverdale's Exile and Return

Miles Coverdale had fled to England after his fright by the Inquisitors of Paris. But anti-Protestant measures set in at home as well as abroad. Cromwell was executed in 1540 and Coverdale's friend Barnes also, with two other reformers and three papists.[4] This mixture of vengeance so astounded a foreign visitor that he exclaimed, "What a country is this!—on the one side they are hanging the Pope's friends, on the other burning his enemies." So Coverdale found it convenient to visit Europe again, where he married Elizabeth Macheson, probably an Englishwoman. He was a priest but the reformers allowed priests to marry and he thus definitely identified himself with the reform movement.

With his Lutheran sympathies and literary tastes Coverdale sought the university town of Tübingen, where his scholarly ability was recognized by the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. Then for a time in much poverty he was

[4]In the frontispiece of the 1541 edition of the Great Bible on the right side of the page Cromwell's coat of arms has been blotted out.

pastor and schoolmaster in a very small place called Berzabern about seventy miles distant on the opposite side of the Rhine, where he could devote most of his time to translating and writing. He thought it wise to live now under the assumed name of Michael Anglus, and we know that under an edict of 1546 his works were forbidden to be imported into England, bought, sold, or kept. In 1540, the year that Cromwell met his death, Convocation examined and criticized the translation of 1539 for not conforming more closely to the Latin. Three years later all marginal notes had been struck from the Bible and the lower classes had been ordered not to read it. The popular uprising in England against Protestant tyranny had thus resulted in a decided Catholic reaction. On the continent the Council of Trent, after sitting for some months, on April 8, 1546, made its final decree on the canonicity of Scripture, affirming the authority of the Latin Vulgate.

But early in 1547 Henry died and again under Edward VI there was a Protestant revival in England. The bishops and "best learned men of the realm" drew up certain royal injunctions and they were handed on "to deans, subdeans, prebendaries, chanters, etc., in every cathedral church." Much was made of the sermon, which now came into chief prominence. One of these injunctions read thus, "Item, that at the sermon time one or two bell-ringers shall be appointed by course to keep the chapter-house door, to the intent that the noise

of the people disturb not the preacher or the hearers of the Word of God." The priestly prayers in Latin were cut short and prayers and psalms were of more congregational character, in English. The selections from the gospels and epistles were to be read to the people in English. Lights were forbidden to be burned before images, and the images themselves, pictures, and windows were in many cases broken.

The Bishop of Winchester refused to comply and was imprisoned, writing that "these seven weeks saving one day I have been here under such straight keeping as I have spoken with no man." Parliament was summoned to meet at Westminster on November 4, 1547, and upon this occasion there was a state pageant, the King and his lords riding in their official robes from the palace to St. Paul's, where Bishop Ridley preached a sermon and the "mass was sung before the lords in the English tongue."

A spirit of lawlessness and disorder soon broke out among certain groups of the lower classes so that restraint had to be applied, and the record states that "his Majesty's Council willeth and straightly commandeth, that no serving man, nor apprentice, nor any other person whatsoever he or they be, shall use hereafter such insolency and evil demeanour towards priests, as reviling, tossing of them, taking violently their caps and tippets from them without just title and cause." The Sacrament,

held by the majority of the people to contain the very presence of the Lord himself, was nicknamed "Jack in the box, with divers other shameful names." So shocking was all this that on November 12th a bill of protest demanding reverence was read in the House of Lords, and then another bill was introduced "for the administration of the Sacrament under both kinds." A combination of the two bills was passed in December with penalties of fines and imprisonment.

With this change in governmental policy Coverdale could now return to England in safety, which he did early in 1548. Cranmer's influence secured his appointment as chaplain to the King, and he became prominent in ecclesiastical circles as preacher and member of commissions. In 1549 on the second Sunday of Lent the *Grey Friar's Chronicle* states that Coverdale preached a sermon at St. Paul's and there the dean "when the high mass was done, commanded the Sacrament at the high altar to be pulled down." On June 9th of that year the Book of Common Prayer came into force and the 20th, Corpus Christi Day, "in divers places in London was kept holyday and many kept none, but did work openly." On July 21st Archbishop Cranmer set an example at St. Paul's, performing "the office himself in a cope and no vestment, nor mitre, nor cross, but a cross staff was borne afore him . . . and so he did all the office and his satin cap on his head all the time."

All this stirred up protest from the other side. In September Bishop Bonner preached at Paul's Cross "to a most numerous congregation and maintained with all his might the corporeal presence in the Lord's Supper," and "no sooner was the sermon over" than Bishops Latimer and Hooper "assembled a great rabblement and inveighed against him." Bishop Bonner was imprisoned and during his trial he wrote to the lord mayor of London praying "that you suffer not yourselves to be abused with such naughty preachers and teachers."

The "rabblement" was certainly effective, for "many quarrels, riots, frays and bloodshed were made in some of the said churches, besides shooting of handguns to doors and the common bringing in of horses and mules into and through the said churches, making the same like a stable or common inn, or rather a den or sink of all unchristianness." Clearly Protestants allowed things to get disgracefully out of hand. Thus the gentle, peace-loving Coverdale had walked into a very nest of hornets, but still he was of great use. He was an eloquent and persuasive preacher and was sent in 1551 into the West to preach down the Catholic rebels, and was made a visitor of Magdalen College, Oxford, for "Oxford men were still pertinaciously sticking in the mud of popery." He also preached the funeral sermon of a noted lord at Westminster Abbey. The same year he was made Bishop of Exeter, and was one of eight bishops with twenty-

four other persons appointed to reform the ecclesiastical laws.

Coverdale's Last Years

But with Catholic Mary's accession in 1553 all this Protestant prosperity changed again and Coverdale went where refugees were gathering, to the province of Westphalia on the Rhine. Some think he found his way later to Geneva and lent a helping hand in the translation of what is known as the Geneva version, but this is doubtful. At any rate when Elizabeth became Queen he returned to England, arriving before the Geneva Bible was published. In 1536 he was honoured with a degree of Doctor of Divinity from Cambridge and obtained a parish in London, which he held until 1566, when he resigned because he disapproved of the restoration of liturgical forms. He died in 1568, at the good old age of eighty-one.

Coverdale was much admired and sought after as a preacher and esteemed as a modest, amiable man of the best intentions, thoroughly good. Yet he was just the opposite of Tyndale in being rather timorous and worried for his safety, leaning on the initiative of others. Without Tyndale's burning zeal he had a more delicate sensitiveness to melody and a mastery of felicitous phrasing. To him a debt of gratitude is due as one of the true lights in the history of the English Bible, although a much lesser one than Wyclif or Tyndale.

The Geneva Bible

Now we come to the Geneva Bible, published first at Geneva in 1560, the Calvinistic version which displaced its predecessors with edition after edition and was distinctly the people's book until some years after the King James Version of 1611. To understand its great success we must look at the violence of the forces influencing people to read the Bible and a certain kind of Bible in the last half of the sixteenth century.

Let us recapitulate and get the outstanding facts in mind once more. First came the two editions of Coverdale's Bible, and Matthew's Bible, then Taverner's and the Great Bible (Cromwell's and Cranmer's being the first and second editions of this), and now the Geneva Version.

As we have observed, persecution was not all directed against the Protestants. Henry's policy was as sharp towards the Catholics when once he had decided to become Protestant as it had been severe against such reformers as Tyndale. Luther's help was sought in framing articles of faith. Cromwell sent embassy after embassy to Wittenberg and Melancthon drew up a Confession which was the basis of the *Ten Articles* presented to Convocation. Before the close of this correspondence Luther remarked, "This King wants to be God. He founds articles of faith, which even the people never did."

Cromwell's administration has been called "the

English Terror." "He had reduced bloodshed to a system. Fragments of his papers still show us with what a business-like brevity he ticked off human lives among the casual 'remembrances' of the day. 'Item, the Abbot of Reading to be sent down to be tried and executed at Reading.' 'Item, to know the king's pleasure touching Master More.' 'Item, when Master Fisher shall go to his execution, and the other.' "

The masses of the people educated so long to associate religion with the priest, the monastery, and the forms of the Catholic faith, at first looked on stunned and amazed; then their smouldering wrath spread from village to village and finally burst out in open rebellion, especially in Yorkshire and the West. The nobility joined the farmers and an army of thirty thousand made "The Pilgrimage of Grace," demanding a reversal of policy and redress of wrongs. This insurrection was put down by summary measures. "The country was covered with gibbets."

Protestants of to-day may sympathize with the destruction of such superstitious relics as "the Blood of Hailes" and the "Rood of Boxley" or the nodding image of the Virgin at Walsingham,[5] but not with the iconoclastic method employed. We wax indignant at the treacherous seduction of Tyndale, lured out to dinner from his home by an

[5]The Rood of Boxley was "A crucifix mechanically contrived so that the priests made it nod and smile or shake its head and frown according to the liberality of its worshipper." A bottle of the Virgin's milk accompanied the nodding image.

invitation of apparent friendship. But the method of the execution of the Catholic mayor of a town in Cornwall was no less contemptible. The chronicler tells us, "This mayor had been busy among the rebels.... On a certain day Sir Anthony Kingstone, with his company, came and were right heartily welcomed to the mayor. And before they sat down to dinner, Sir Anthony, calling the mayor aside, showed him that there must be execution done in that town, and therefore willed him with speed to cause a pair of gallows to be made, that the same might be ready by the end of dinner. The mayor went diligently about it, and caused the same to be done. When dinner was ended, Sir Anthony called the mayor unto him, and asked him if that were ready that he spake to him of, and he answered it was ready. Then he took the mayor by the hand, and prayed him to bring him to the place where the same was and so he did. And when Sir Anthony saw them, he said unto the mayor, 'Think you they be strong enough?' 'Yea, Sir,' said he, 'that they are!' 'Well then,' said Sir Anthony, 'get you even up to them, for they are provided for you'... So that without longer respite or tarrying then was the mayor hanged."[6]

But the people won in their struggle with Henry, and Cromwell fell. The *Six Articles* of compromise were passed. And then followed the death of the King. With the accession of the young Ed-

[6]Grafton's *Chronicle,* quoted in *Troubles Connected with the Prayer Book of 1549* by Nicholas Pocock.

ward came "the Protestant Misrule" of the Protectorate. The *Six Articles* were repealed, the English Book of Common Prayer[7] was substituted for the missal and the breviary, a reformer's catechism was issued for the instruction of the masses. The *Forty-two Articles* of doctrine were adopted, the basis of the famous *Thirty-nine Articles* which have been recently defended by Episcopal churches in America. Adherence to the new liturgy and new doctrinal statements was rigorously enforced, and heretics were sent to the stake.

This policy hit the Lutheran sympathizers as well as the Catholics; Bishop Hooper refused to wear the episcopal robes and priests threw away their surplices. But they suffered for it.[8] The universities were hit hard also; intellectual life received a serious set-back. The teaching of divinity was stopped. "All that men saw was religious and political chaos, in which ecclesiastical order had perished and in which politics were dying down into the squabbles of a knot of nobles over the spoils of the Church and the Crown."

Then Edward died and the people asserted themselves again with the demand that Mary be made Queen rather than Lady Jane Grey, and in 1553 "bloody Mary" began to send shivers of fear

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[7]Cranmer was responsible for the first Book of Common Prayer. He took some of the most beautiful portions from the Roman Breviary, "but the high and solemn music of its language must be credited to the genius of the translator."

[8]Bishop Hooper was martyred at Gloucester.

through every Protestant heart. It was hopeless for any reformer to speak in England then, and almost as dubious a prospect to keep his faith intact in silence. Those who had escaped the stake up to this time were victims now. John Rogers and the eloquent Hugh Latimer were among the first, and before Mary was through about three hundred were martyred. And so Protestants fled in large numbers to Europe and especially to the city of Calvin, where they would find sympathy, peace and the possibility of doing some active service for their cause. By 1555 the English congregation in Geneva numbered at least two hundred.

Thus a group of these refugees, perhaps including Coverdale for a short while, sat down to the task of producing a truly Calvinistic English Bible. Geneva was the home not only of Calvin but of Theodore Beza, the most noted biblical scholar of the day. Beza's name is attached to one of the famous old uncial manuscripts of the New Testament, known as Codex Bezae, which he procured a few years after the Geneva Bible was published, and which has been of great value in the recent revisions of modern scholars. There was perfect freedom in this city; it was a Mecca for reformed scholars of various nationalities and the acknowledged headquarters of theological and classical learning, although to the Pope it was "a nest of devils and apostates." Here the translators had the assistance of a brother-in-law of Calvin by the name of Whittingham, who later became Dean of

Durham under Queen Elizabeth. Thus they worked "for the space of two years and more day and night."

There was so much sympathy with this undertaking of a new English Bible that the Genevan congregation bore the expense of the first printing. One of the members of that congregation was John Bodley, the father of the founder of the Bodleian library at Oxford. He obtained from Elizabeth exclusive license as publisher for seven years.

The Geneva Bible was not a fresh translation but a revision of the Great Bible for the Old Testament, and for the New it made use of Whittingham's edition of Tyndale's work, which had appeared shortly before. Beza's Latin version and French and German texts were at hand. This volume was very much smaller than the Great Bible and therefore more adaptable to common use as a household book. It was the first to be printed in the sharp Roman type instead of the heavy black-faced German type and had the text broken into chapters and verses following Stephen's Greek text. It also used italics for words not in the original. There was an introduction by Calvin and explanatory notes of a Calvinistic tone. There were wood-cuts and the innovation of maps, although Coverdale's Bible of 1535 had a map of Palestine. After the edition of 1579 a Calvinistic catechism was added to the Geneva Bible.

This version was much more scholarly than the Great Bible, yet using forceful, idiomatic words which came close home to the people, and it had its day when Mary's reign of terror was over and Elizabeth came to the throne. Elizabeth showed her appreciation of the Bible on the day of her coronation. Father Time offered her a copy during the royal procession with his child Truth standing by his side, Elizabeth graciously receiving it with a reverent kiss. It is said that she began each day by reading an hour in the Greek Testament. Therefore the Geneva refugees returned to England anticipating protection from Elizabeth as a Protestant and student of the Bible. Elizabeth, however, never gave the Geneva Bible her royal sanction. She had no liking for Calvin or the Calvinistic John Knox who was one of its promoters. The latter aroused her ire with his *First Blast Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women.* Yet sixty editions of this Bible came out in Elizabeth's reign, one hundred and forty by the middle of the seventeenth century, showing its exceeding popularity. Scotland, under the influence of Knox, welcomed it eagerly. Its graphic pictures helped the illiterate. Its terse English and running comments were satisfactory to a Puritan temper. The avidity with which it was read was due partly to its attractiveness but more largely to the ferocious hatred of Catholicism which Mary's persecutions had engendered.

The Bishops' Bible

And now we come to the last English version of this century to have much effect upon Protestant people, the so-called Bishops' Bible. This appeared in 1568, in the midst of the great popularity of the Geneva version. As we have seen, thirty-one years before, in 1537, when Matthew's Bible appeared, Archbishop Cranmer accepted it "until such time as we bishops shall set forth a better, which," he adds, "I think will not be till a day after doomsday." Evidently the "doomsday" arrived, not with the Great Bible, but when the bishops realized that the people were getting saturated with extreme Calvinistic views without permission from them.

In 1559 Matthew Parker was chosen by Queen Elizabeth to become Archbishop of Canterbury. He was a man of character and scholarship who had declared himself on the Protestant side when Lady Jane Grey was proposed as Queen instead of the Catholic Mary. As a result he had to live in obscurity during her reign and when Elizabeth sensed his worth and raised him to the archbishopric he at first modestly declined, sincerely preferring a more inconspicuous rôle. He finally consented, saying, "if he had not been so much bound to the mother he would not so soon have granted to serve the daughter." The first bishops appointed to consecrate him included Tunstall, whom we have met before. These bishops refused

flatly, but four others were found to do it, including Coverdale, then holding the see of Exeter.

The Lutheran party as a whole were set against the institution of bishops with their theory of apostolic succession. They also disapproved of much which the Prayer Book contained. As we have seen, large sections had been taken from the Roman Breviary. Elizabeth on the other hand had refused to send representatives to the Council of Trent and the Romanists felt that the breach was now so wide it could not be bridged.

Archbishop Parker was not an opportunist like Cranmer, yet he felt that it was time to offer some conciliatory measures between the extremes on both sides, and he became very active in trying to establish a *via media* between the traditional Romanism and the new Puritanism now beginning to be definitely crystallized. Elizabeth considered him a man of good judgment, worth following, although she openly disapproved of some of his tenets, especially the marriage of clerics. Her attitude in this is shown by the fact that she accepted the gracious hospitality offered by his wife at Lambeth Palace but upon leaving said, "Madam I may not call you; Mistress I am ashamed to call you; but yet I thank you."

Archbishop Parker restored the powers of Convocation and called for a revision of the articles of belief, reducing them to the famous "Thirty-nine" as finally adopted. He revised the church calendar also, retaining many of the saints' days as cele-

brated by the Catholics. Then for five years he devoted himself to the publication of a Bible which should be authorized by the Crown. The idea had been proposed by Bishop Cox and readily taken up by this scholarly statesman. That he was a man with a true interest in learning is indicated by the fact that he set on foot an effort to recover as many as possible of the manuscripts scattered by the wrecking of the monasteries. He had his agents both in England and on the continent and it is to him that modern scholars owe gratitude for the preservation of first editions of many chronicles. He endeavoured to get together competent scholars for a new translation of the Bible and appointed a committee, nine of whom were bishops. He himself became chief editor, writing a preface and being responsible for a good share of the text.

His plan of procedure is outlined by Strype. "The Archbishop took upon him the labour to contrive and set the whole work a-going in a proper method, by sorting out the whole Bible into parcels . . . and distributing those parcels to able bishops and other learned men, to peruse and collate each the book or books allotted them; sending withal his instructions for the method they should observe; and they to add some short marginal notes for the illustration or correction of the text. And all these portions of the Bible being finished and sent back to the archbishop, he was to add the last hand to them and so to take care for printing and publishing the whole."

His lieutenants, however, were not very scholarly. One man rendered certain Psalms according to their translation in the New Testament, another wanted the verbs "to be used uniformly in one tense." But Parker accomplished his difficult task as editor and the work was finished in 1568. He then wrote a letter to Queen Elizabeth showing how this differed from the Geneva Version and advising her to issue an edict that this and no other version should be read in the churches for the sake of promoting unity and concord in the realm.

The success of his work may be judged in various ways. First, there is in St. John's College library at Cambridge *The Life and Acts of Matthew Parker* written by John Strype and published in 1711. The title goes on to say "under whose Primacy and Influence the Reformation of Religion was happily effected and the church of England restored and established upon the Principles whereon it stands to this Day." But we note that in Parker's later writings he became so annoyed by the Puritans that he called them "irritable precisians" and they retorted by dubbing him "the Pope of Lambeth." And after he was long dead and buried ardent reformers in 1648 dug up his bones and buried them under a dunghill.

When this work for which Parker is especially noted, the Bishops' Bible, is examined, we find it of no especial merit, although the New Testament possessed commendable points. There was an ap-

parent lack of consultation between the different revisers, for the style is uneven and the result seems more like a patchwork than a homogeneous volume. They depended on the Great Bible for the Old Testament, but were more equal to revising independently the Greek of the New, going over it twice, the second revision being published in 1572. Lawrence, the scholarly headmaster at Shrewsbury, had his hand in this and here we find some phrases later adopted in the King James Version such as, "the middle wall of partition," "less than the least of all saints." This version was divided into verses like the Geneva Bible, and this custom now became confirmed, to the detriment of the literary value of the text, although affording an excellent means of ready reference. It also included the Geneva commentary, and marginal notes copied or modified from the Geneva text. It contained illustrations of no credit, some of the woodcuts being quite pagan in origin such as that of Leda and the Swan, which came out in the second edition, causing it to be called the Leda Bible. Cranmer's preface to the Great Bible was included as well as the new preface by Parker. It was a large, sumptuous volume with a portrait of Queen Elizabeth on the title page. Because of its royal and ecclesiastical backing it superseded the Great Bible in the churches and held sway for forty years. The last edition was published in 1606. However, the Geneva Bible had such a hold on the people that it was read in the home long after the Bishops'

Bible was set aside, and its last edition was not until 1644.

The Douay Bible

One more version needs to be mentioned as really belonging to this century, for it was started and the New Testament published in 1582 at Rheims, the whole Bible, however, not being completed until 1609. This is what is known as the Douay Version, for it was finished at Douay in Flanders. It is the version used to-day by the Roman Catholics.

Alarmed at the inroads the English vernacular Bible was making among their own people, in preference to the sacred Latin, some English Catholics determined to make a translation which should be sanctioned by the Roman Church. These English priests had been educated at Douay and there they began their work.

It is quite clear that the Catholics did not really approve of a people's Bible. The Latin Bible read by the priests at the service and interpreted by them was in their minds not only sufficient, but even a far better procedure for educating the people. They argued that the masses were all more or less ignorant of the meaning of the Scripture and that it required special training for a right interpretation. This was what the Church trained its priests for, to interpret the teachings according to the right authority, which was of course papal authority. To trust such interpretation to the individual, with

all his prejudices and spiritual ignorance, was quite unsafe. This has been the attitude of the Roman Church even to the present day, and it accounts for the fact that Catholics are not nearly so familiar with the Bible as they are with their prayer-book.

This was the main point of protest, by Wyclif first and then by Luther: the right of the individual to go straight to the Bible itself and find what the text says was firmly maintained. To do this it was necessary for the people to be able to read the Bible and to do that it was necessary for the Bible to be translated into their own tongue. This led also to the advance in common school education. Luther said children should be taught how to read the Bible in order that everyone might make up his own mind as to the truth there contained. John Colet founded his school in London chiefly for the purpose of the better education of boys in the Bible. It was for this purpose as well as for general culture that he secured the best Greek as well as Latin teachers available. And over the school he placed the inscription: *"Schola Catechizationis Puerorum in fide Christi Opt. Max. et bonis Litteris,"* which may be seen to-day.

Thus for a hundred years the English-speaking people had been getting a taste of this kind of liberty. Queen Mary's furious opposition to it only whetted their desire the more and the Geneva Bible was the most widely read book all over the country. So great was the demand that it could not

be restrained even by the ecclesiastical attempt at a Bishops' Bible. It was therefore in sheer self-defense that Catholic scholars decided to make an English translation of their own, to be sanctioned by the Roman Church.

Their college at Douay had been founded in 1568 by an English canon for the purpose of educating English Catholics. Protestantism was then so dominant in England that these scholars were exiles, as the Geneva reformers had been a few years before. The founder of the college was a William Allen, of a prominent old English family, who had graduated at Oxford, had been a Fellow and taken his Master's degree, then served as Principal of St. Mary's Hall, and when Queen Mary came into power had been made Canon of York. Later Rome bestowed upon him the Cardinal's hat. Under Elizabeth, Allen went with other refugees to the University of Louvain for study, but came back to England to speak and write vigorously against the Protestants. He was searched for but escaped arrest.

Forced to leave England he went to the University of Douay, recently established by Philip of Spain. Here he was made regius professor of divinity in 1570 and conceived the idea of starting an English college to be affiliated to the university. He said, "We feared that if the schism should be much longer, owing to the death of the few who, at its beginning, had been cast out of the English universities for the faith, no seed would be left here-

after for the restoration of religion and that heresy would thus obtain a perpetual and peaceful possession of the realm, there being no one to make reclamation, even though an opportunity should offer at the death of the queen or otherwise."

This English college was prospering until the Calvinists under the banner of the Prince of Orange stirred up the people in the city of Douay and the English students were banished in 1578, fleeing to Rheims, where they still continued their college under the presidency of Allen. Here they pursued their work on the translation of the Bible, publishing the New Testament in 1582. It is therefore known by the name of the Rheims New Testament. They completed the translation of both Testaments here but for some reason there was a delay in publishing the Old Testament, which did not appear until 1609, after they had been settled again in Douay for sixteen years. Therefore the whole Bible is known as the Douay Version.

In evaluating this work it must be remembered that Douay was a centre for the Jesuits, a remarkable order which already in its life of a half century had grown to ten thousand adherents. Ignatius Loyala, its founder, while particularly interested in missionary work and the fostering of a true devotional life, also realized with statesmanlike genius the importance of scholarship. He himself toiled most diligently to complete an education neglected in his youth, and Jesuit priests must undergo not only seven years of training before they

could graduate from college but three more of theological studies before they received their orders.

The men engaged in this translation were mostly graduates of Oxford and Cambridge, Gregory Martin of Oxford being chiefly responsible. Marginal notes of a controversial character were liberally added, as, for example, "The holy Scriptures to carnal men and Heretickes are as pearls to swine." In their preface they refer thus to other English translations: "We therefore having compassion to see our beloved countrymen, with extreme danger to their souls, to use only such profane translations . . . have set forth for you (benign readers) the New Testament to begin withal trusting that it may give occasion to you, after diligent perusing thereof, to lay away at last such their impure versions as hitherto you have been forced to occupy." At the end there is "An Ample and Particular Table Directing the Reader to all Catholic truths, deduced out of the holy Scriptures, and impugned by the Adversaries."

The year after the New Testament appeared a Protestant scholar, William Fulke, printed it with the Bishops' Bible in parallel columns, adding rejoinders to the Catholic comments at the end of each chapter. This only fanned the flame of popularity.

A group of these zealous English Jesuits went back to England from Douay with a very ardent missionary purpose to revive decadent Catholi-

cism, much to Elizabeth's disgust. In characteristic fashion she ordered an edict enacted that pronounced all such persons "guilty of high treason." When they brought over their Rheims New Testament they did it in the full consciousness that the Pope had issued a bull excommunicating her and pronouncing her no queen at all. Indeed, Elizabeth was more or less in danger of her life and to hinder the propagation of such treasonable teaching vigorous measures were taken to suppress this Bible. Any one of her subjects found with a copy was guilty and in danger of the rack.

And what about its merits as a translation? The Vulgate which was the basis for it rather than the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts, was followed very closely by the translators. Its Latinisms were slavishly preserved so that as English literature it has been pronounced "not English." Although in later years it has been revised and modernized, still much of it remains "simply barbarous" in style and incorrect as a translation of the Hebrew or Greek. Roman Catholics have for some years acknowledged their need of a better version and a group of scholars have been diligently at work upon a new translation going back to the original texts. This is called the Westminster Version of the Sacred Scriptures and several volumes of the New Testament with explanatory notes are already published.

Nevertheless the Douay Bible is not without its use even to modern scholars if they wish to get

back to an Anglicized rendering of the remarkable translation of Jerome into the vulgar tongue.

Thus ended the turbulent sixteenth century; the next period in the romance of the English Bible is of an entirely different character.

CHAPTER V

THE TWO PREVALENT VERSIONS OF TO-DAY

Puritan Days

"No GREATER moral change ever passed over a nation than passed over England during the years which parted the middle of the reign of Elizabeth from the meeting of the Long Parliament. England became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible."[1] So writes the historian. Elizabeth died in 1603 and we now enter the period of Puritanism, turning away from the versatile, humanity-loving Shakespeare to the austere, theologically minded Milton, from the tactics of Thomas Cromwell to the stern virtues of Oliver.

The Puritan was a man of force, none more so, the force of elemental integrity and loyalty, which lent dignity to his conduct and inspired fear in his opponents. His beliefs were clear-cut even if narrow-minded; his actions were correspondingly sharp and decisive. No better tribute to the Puritan has been paid than that of Macaulay: "The ostentatious simplicity of their dress, their sour aspect, their nasal twang, their stiff posture, their

[1]Green, J. R., *Short History of England,* Ch. VIII, "Puritan England."

long graces, their Hebrew names, the scriptural phrases which they introduced on every occasion, their contempt of human learning, their detestation of polite amusements, were indeed fair game for the laughers. But it is not from the laughers alone that the philosophy of history is to be learnt. . . . Those who roused the people to resistance—who directed their measures through a long series of eventful years—who formed out of the most unpromising materials the finest army that Europe had ever seen—who trampled down King, Church, and aristocracy—who, in the short intervals of domestic sedition and rebellion, made the name of England terrible to every nation on the face of the earth, were no vulgar fanatics . . . The Puritans were men whose minds had derived a peculiar character from the daily contemplation of superior beings and external interests . . .These fanatics brought to civil and military affairs a coolness of judgment and an immutability of purpose which some writers have thought inconsistent with their religious zeal, but which were in fact the necessary effects of it. . . . We perceive the absurdity of their manners. We dislike the sullen gloom of their domestic habits. We acknowledge that the tone of their minds was often injured by straining after things too high for mortal reach. And we know that, in spite of their hatred of Popery, they too often fell into the worst vices of that bad system, intolerance and extravagant austerity . . . Yet when all circumstances are taken into considera-

tion, we do not hesitate to pronounce them a brave, a wise, an honest, and a useful body."[2]

The seventeenth century was the era of Puritanism, and it was in 1611 that under the patronage of James I a Bible was produced which became not only the religious authority for English-speaking people for over two centuries and a half, but the standard for English literature. No rival version appeared until the Revised Version of 1885. It was in 1620 that the Pilgrim Fathers landed on the bleak coast of New England and soon after that the Puritan movement from England took possession of that section of the New World. So forceful were these independent, high-minded people that their stamp has been fixed indelibly upon American history, upon the Constitution of the United States, and the American love of liberty. Yet, strangely enough, in people wishing liberty for themselves, so rigid an adherence to high principle caused persecution of others differing in belief and a restraint upon freedom of spirit which brought in its wake a violent reaction.

Reverence for the Bible as a book was carried to such an extreme that in some circles bibliolatry took the place of the worship of relics. The superstitious worship of the "Blood of Hailes" can be matched by the belief in good or bad luck according as one treated the Bible. Incredible as it may seem, so late as 1867 a case was tried in London by the method known as the "Ordeal." A key was

[2]From Macaulay's *Essay on Milton.*

loosely fastened to the Bible at Psalm 50:18, which reads: "When thou sawest a thief thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers." The Bible was then made to revolve while the names of those who were suspected of the crime were mentioned one after another. The name at which the book stopped revolving was that of the guilty person. That such location of authority in a holy book should be taken over from a practice with Homer and with Virgil's *Aeneid,* known as *Sortes Homericae,* and *Sortes Virgilianae,* and be transferred to *Sortes Biblicae,* simply reveals how pagan traditions were mixed in with much that has come down to us in Christianity.[3] And the Puritan atmosphere as well as that of the Middle Ages was haunted by belief in devils and witches. The Salem witchcraft delusion of 1692 is one of the strangest and saddest episodes in American history and the last victim in England was not until 1716 and in Scotland in 1722.[4] But notwithstanding its fanatical extravagances Puritanism was now in the saddle, although it had to fight well for its position. Eighteenth century rationalism, the "free thought" of that day, as well as English culture, ridiculed it or took the high ground of ignoring it. It was not, however, a movement to be ignored.

[3]See the *New Schaff—Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge,* article "Divination." Also Brand, *Observations on the Popular Antiquities of Great Britain,* Vol. III, p. 353, under "Divination by Sieve and Shears" for instance of this practice as late as 1832. See also Wild, L. H., *The Evolution of the Hebrew People,* p. 93.

[4]See Wild, L. H., *Evolution of the Hebrew People,* p. 87.

To-day even New England can no longer be called Puritan. This is due not only to a revulsion from straight-laced discipline but from the pouring in of peoples from all over the earth to accept the welcome of the land of liberty.

Yet the wave of Puritanism passed over even into the nineteenth century and vitally affected the everyday life of the people. From childhood boys and girls were made familiar with biblical characters and biblical phrases by the reading of Scripture at the daily family prayers, as well as by habitual attendance at church on Sunday. The great authors of those three centuries made such constant allusions to the Bible that one cannot read intelligently not only poems of Milton, but of Tennyson, Browning, or Whittier, without familiarity with the Scriptural text. Essayists like Charles Lamb, Thomas Carlyle, Matthew Arnold, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, novelists like Thackeray, Scott, and Dickens, orators like Patrick Henry and William Lloyd Garrison, statesmen like Abraham Lincoln, William Gladstone, and John Hay, were all brought up on the Bible as daily food so that when they wanted an apt illustration or figure of speech the biblical words occurred most naturally to their minds. English-speaking people had chosen as their guide a book of such lofty significance and such noble style that we may well thank the Puritans for gluing our attention closely upon it for three whole centuries.

Now America as well as England is in another

era, another New World. This generation knows little of the atmosphere which children breathed in the seventeenth, eighteenth, or even the nineteenth centuries. No longer do people as a whole consider a knowledge of the Bible necessary for happiness, prosperity, or even salvation. No longer can it be said to be a household book in the sense of Puritan days, and no longer are our children familiar enough with biblical phrases to understand adequately the great writers even of the Victorian Age.

Therefore we divide our periods for studying the romance of the English Bible at the beginning of the seventeenth century and the end of the nineteenth.

King James and the Bible

At the death of Elizabeth the Catholics hoped for better treatment but they were doomed to disappointment, six thousand of them being arrested within a year. It was plain that James was going to uphold the Protestants. The Puritan and Catholic element were pulling hard against one another. James was neither. He was a Protestant, yet the Scotch Calvinism under which he had been brought up was too strong for his taste. The Puritan element was grumbling, for they were afraid of the renewed efforts of the Romanists to regain their power. The Gunpowder Plot against both King and Parliament had been discovered on November 5, 1604. A lively discussion had been going on

concerning the "popish usages" incorporated in the Book of Common Prayer and shortly after his coronation James called a conference to examine into "things pretended to be amiss in the church." His attention was called to "the most corrupted translation" of Scripture in the Prayer Book.

James himself was somewhat of a biblical student and he emphasized the study of the Bible by his own practice. Soon it was highly desirable for him to find biblical authority for his assertion of "the divine right of kings." "As it is atheism and blasphemy to dispute what God can do," he said, "so it is presumption to dispute what a king can do, or to say that a king cannot do this or that." His successors found that Puritan England would not swallow such arrogant autocracy. But in the meantime all these considerations led James to set on foot a most far-reaching procedure, the production of a new translation of the Bible, to be known as the King James or the Authorized Version. As a matter of fact there was no royal edict commanding its use; it simply received that title because of the royal patronage.

The King appointed as a committee to do the work fifty-four of the best scholars of the land, representing all phases of belief among Protestants from Anglicans to Puritans. The latter would have been satisfied with the Geneva Bible and the Anglicans liked the Bishops' Version, but James said there was too much confusion in the use of dif-

ferent Bibles; there should be one uniform version satisfactory to all. Moreover James thought his committee could do a better piece of work than the bishops under Parker had done.

Only forty-seven of the scholars chosen eventually shared in the undertaking. The rules they were to follow were definitely laid down. The first and most important was that the Bishops' Bible was to be "as little altered as the truth of the original will permit," another that "the old ecclesiastical words were to be kept, for example, the word *Church* not to be translated *Congregation.*" They were to work in sections and "every particular man of each company to take the same chapter or chapters; and having translated or amended them severally by himself where he thinketh good, all to meet together, confer what they have done, and agree for their parts what shall stand. As any one company hath dispatched any one book in this manner, they shall send it to the rest to be considered of seriously and judiciously, for his majesty is very careful in this point." They were to have the Hebrew and Greek texts constantly before them and to consult Tyndale's, Matthew's, Coverdale's, Whitchurch's and the Geneva translations.[5]

These scholars collaborated harmoniously and skillfully. In their interesting and well-written preface they say: "Truly (good Christian Reader) we never thought from the beginning that we should need to make a new Translation, nor yet to make

[5]Whittchurch was a London publisher of the Great Bible.

of a bad one a good one . . . but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones, one principal good one . . . To that purpose there were many chosen, that were greater in other men's eyes than in their own, and that sought the truth rather than their own praise." Thus in a truly humble and Christian frame of mind they evidently undertook their task, consulting, as they assert, "Chaldee, Hebrew, Syrian, Greek, or Latin, Spanish, French, Italian or Dutch; neither did we disdain to revise that which we had done, and to bring back to the anvil that which we had hammered; but having and using as great helps as were needful, and fearing no reproach for slowness, nor coveting praise for expedition, we have at the length, through the good hand of the Lord upon us, brought the work to that pass that you see."[6]

These men assembled at Cambridge, Oxford, and Westminster, two groups in each place, and when all had finished their work, two from each centre went up to London to prepare it finally for the press. The time occupied upon the translation itself was about two years and nine months and the six final editors spent nine months in going over the whole.

In 1611 appeared the masterpiece which has been called "the noblest and most beautiful work in the world . . . a monumental work,"[7] "a book,

[6]The preface may be found in old editions of the King James Version.

[7]Canon Hoare.

which, if everything else in our language should perish would alone suffice to show the whole extent of its beauty and power."[8] By the middle of the century it had displaced the Bishops' Bible in churches and the Geneva Bible in homes and almost down to the present has held undisputed sway in English-speaking countries. Even to-day it is *the* best seller among all books notwithstanding more recent versions and the popularity of other reading. The first edition was a large folio volume in black-letter type, dedicated "To the Most High and Mightie Prince, James by the grace of God, King of Great Britaine, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith." The frontispiece was a full-page engraving, the title occupying the centre, and on either side Moses and Aaron, with an evangelist in each corner. Above is the Paschal Lamb surrounded by the apostles, and directly above the Lamb is the Holy Dove, while at the summit is the name of God in Hebrew characters, and on either side the Sun and the Moon. At the very foot of the page is the pelican, the symbol of piety.

The men who had their hands on this text were real scholars. The last revision was in 1638. For many years it was published with its lengthy but "noble preface," written by Dr. Miles Smith, later made Bishop of Gloucester, a man who "had Hebrew at his finger-tips" and who was very appreciative of all the versions that had gone before. James had wanted the bare text without notes, but in

[8]Macaulay.

1649 comments were inserted. In 1701 Archbishop Ussher's chronology was added, a worthy historical attempt for his day but entirely superseded now, although there are still some editions to be found which contain it, placing the Creation at the quite impossible year 4004 B. C. Cross references were later added and this with the breaking up of the text into the small sections of verses has caused it to be named the worst printed book in the world. Editors keenly alive to its literary excellence and regretting this handicap in reading it have of late issued it without such encumbrances and many of its obsolete words have been modernized from time to time.

The King James Version still holds its own in a great many homes and pulpits. "From the middle of the seventeenth century, the King's Bible has been the acknowledged Bible of the English-speaking nations throughout the world simply because it is the best."[9]

What is the secret? A few of Wyclif's phrases are here but Tyndale is largely responsible for it, for the Bishops' Bible which was used as its foundation was as we have seen only a revamping of the Great Bible and that in turn depended on Matthew's text and that was Rogers' editing of Tyndale's work plus Coverdale's additions. Coverdale put his delicate touch on it, the sturdy tone of the

[9]Bishop Westcott. The Cambridge Press published in 1909 a reprint of the first edition with a facsimile title page, dedication to King James, and the translator's preface. The Oxford Press made a reprint in 1833.

Geneva text and the sonorous Latinisms of the Rhemish New Testament modified certain sentences. But Tyndale was the genius who penetrated to the very heart of the Scripture, finding priceless treasures, then sent it on its way in English waters like a ship laden with life-giving fruits.

But always in considering this, our English classic, we must remember that behind it were the world's profoundest religious truths uttered by the Hebrews in concrete, vivid, figurative expression. It was this rich ore which was cast into the English crucible to be heated hot with religious fervour and with the zest of a new intellectual awakening, a new freedom of the individual, a new national loyalty. Out of the fire came this book, so simple, direct, and suggestive in language, so beautiful and resonant in rhythm, so majestic and inspiring in tone that as literature it is said even to surpass the original, and no one influence has been so great in the life of English-speaking people, religiously, morally, socially, politically, as has this version.

The Revised Version

Then why was there any attempt to displace the King James Version?

By the middle of the nineteenth century a great intellectual change was taking place. Science and historical research had brought to light a new world of learning, all study falling under the spell of the scientific method. The idea of evolution

was quickening imagination. Fascinating finds in archæology were luring men to reconstruct the background of life and culture from which ancient literatures sprang. And in the historical perspective thus taken, the centuries of development necessary to produce our Bible were clearly appearing in outline behind the intervening fog. Biblical studies were advancing by leaps and bounds in scholarly skill and method and in material now placed at the service of scholars. The old conceptions of a static world and an infallible book were giving way. In other words, "biblical criticism" had arrived and the generally accepted authority of the King James Version was being questioned in circles of learning. Therefore scholars felt that it was time for a new translation.

On February 10, 1870, Convocation unanimously voted "to report upon the desirableness of a Revision of the Authorized Version of the Old and New Testament, whether by marginal notes or otherwise, in all those passages where plain and clear errors, whether in the Hebrew or Greek Text originally adopted by the Translators, or in the translations made from the same, shall, on due investigation, be found to exist." This was a decisive step. It was no new thought, for scholars had been debating the question among themselves for thirteen years and more. As early as 1856 a notice had been given to Convocation that a request to the Crown would in due time be made "to appoint a body of learned men well skilled in the

original languages of the Holy Scriptures to consider such amendments of the Authorized Version as have been already proposed."

Discussion of this project had previously been brought to public notice by many articles in English periodicals like the *Edinburgh* and *Westminster Reviews*. But this announcement was not very heartily welcomed. A counter notice appeared on the Convocation bulletin board, declaring "it is not desirable to countenance any efforts to make changes in the text . . . but that any alterations or additions which it may be deemed expedient by competent authority to be adopted, should be confined to the margin, and not be introduced into the text." And so the matter lay fallow for a dozen years.

There was much more readiness to undertake the work of revising the New Testament than the Old for it was felt that the Greek had received a great deal more attention among scholars than Hebrew. The names of Dean Alford and Archbishop Trench are classic among biblical scholars of Greek to-day. They were pioneers in modern research. It was their works as well as that of others[10] which had stirred up the lively interest. But it was a demand originating in the circle of scholars and not a people's movement.

There was an attempt at revision of John's Gospel, Romans, I and II Corinthians, by "Five Cler-

[10]Conybeare and Howson's work on St. Paul and Dean Stanley's books on the New Testament background are examples.

gymen" and of other epistles by "Four Clergymen." These were published separately and received commendation by such men as Archbishop Trench, who said "they have shown by proof, that it is possible to revise our Version and at the same time to preserve unimpaired the character of the English in which it is composed." But he shows the temper of the times when he commends the fact that "reverent hands touch that building (which some would have wholly pulled down, that it might be wholly built up again); these find only the need of here and there replacing a stone which had been incautiously built in the wall . . . while they leave the building itself, in its main features and framework, untouched."

Why was this extreme caution necessary in changing even a word of the text of the King James Version? The answer can readily be found in the fact that public opinion had been left undisturbed for two hundred and fifty years to settle its faith undisputedly upon one version of the English Bible as the sacred Word of God. The dogma of verbal inspiration was also quite generally accepted even when the Revised Version appeared and to the people at large the inspiration of the words of Scripture meant the words of their English Bible.[11]

[11]The Westminster Confession was an embodiment of the Calvinistic declarations of the Westminster Assembly which met between 1644 and 1647 and for a hundred years it was adopted "for substance of doctrine" in the American Congregational churches; in addition it influenced Presbyterians, Baptists and others. It was very explicit upon the authority of the Bible. After enumerating the books in the Bible it says, "All which are given

To revise it meant to them to tamper with something sacred and inviolable, just as in Wyclif's and Tyndale's day to replace the sacred Latin with English was a mark of irreverence. Dr. Hoare tells of a young deacon who argued that if the Authorized Version was good enough for St. Paul, it was good enough for him.

And so even in 1870, when the psychological moment had come for Convocation to support cordially the motion for revision, the scholars selected moved very cautiously in their changes. Convocation took a liberal attitude in deciding to invite Non-conformists to join the Established Church in the undertaking and to seek also the coöperation of American scholars. Two companies of twenty-seven members each were appointed in England and in due time two corresponding companies were formed in the United States. A good deal of stress was laid upon the value of "the united operation of several minds," many of the faults of previous versions being accredited not only to imperfect scholarship but to the fact that in most cases they were the products of an individual mind, and therefore perhaps a prejudiced one.

Eight rules were in general accepted. The four most important were:

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by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life . . . to be received because it is the Word of God," in another place affirming its "infallible truth and divine authority." The Swiss Declaration of 1675 held that even the vowel points which the Massoretic school had inserted between the consonants of the old Hebrew text must have been inspired. (See remarks on this passage, p. 205.)

(1) As few alterations were to be made in the text as possible.
(2) The alterations were to be expressed in the language of the Authorized and previous versions.
(3) The Greek and Hebrew text to be used should be the one for which there was the preponderance of evidence.
(4) Each company was to review their work twice and the final revision was to be accepted by two thirds of those present.[12]

And thus finally about seventy-five Greek and Hebrew scholars from England and America assumed the task. They were guided by four considerations: the possession of several of the earliest uncial or capital letter Greek manuscripts, dating from the third to the fifth centuries A. D., which were not available to the scholars of 1611; the refinement of Hebrew and Greek scholarship and discoveries like that of the principles underlying the structure of Hebrew poetry which had been made by Bishop Lowth in the eighteenth century; the light thrown upon obscure passages by historical and archæological studies; and changes in the English language itself which had during the centuries caused certain words to become obsolete or so archaic that their meaning was not commonly understood.

Under the first head, the old manuscripts dis-

[12]See Preface to the first edition.

covered, the German scholar Tischendorf had done an invaluable service in finding what is known as the Sinaitic manuscript kept in a monastery at Mount Sinai and unknown to the world until he found it in 1844. He also had visited the Vatican library and seen the uncial manuscript there and had succeeded in inducing the Roman Catholic Church to allow outsiders to have facsimile copies. Before this he had visited Paris and discovered a valuable *palimpsest*. Underneath the sermons of St. Ephraem, which Catherine de Medici had read on a journey from Italy to Paris, scholars had seen traces of capital letters which Tischendorf managed to restore by the use of chemicals so that they could be read successfully. Thus the Ephraem Codex of the Bible was another important asset. A fourth valuable New Testament manuscript is called the Alexandrian, sent to King James by the patriarch of Constantinople when he heard of the King's interest in a new version. This was a text which had been rescued from the Alexandrian fire and kept in the library of Constantinople for centuries. It did not arrive in England until too late for use in the King James Version and was placed in the royal archives until the revisers of the nineteenth century unearthed it. A fifth was Beza's Codex, unknown until after the Geneva Bible had been produced. In addition to these very early uncial manuscripts many more cursives (manuscripts written in the running hand) were now available than had been in 1611. About 2500 Greek manu-

scripts of the New Testament, or parts of it, can be examined to-day. If fragments are counted the number rises to 4000. Scholars like Dean Alford[13] and Dr. Hort had been diligently studying many of these New Testament texts, correcting by their use the texts previously supposed to be the nearest to the original. As a result a revision of the old *Textus Receptus* appeared in 1881, edited by the famous Greek scholars Westcott and Hort. Although not published until the same year as the Revised New Testament this masterly reconstruction of the Greek text was really the basis for the revised translation.[14] Westcott and Hort's Greek Testament is the chief one still studied as the most accurate we have. The revisers necessarily spent much time and careful thought in deciding between the different wording in these early manuscripts, as is manifest by the marginal notes inserted, as for example at Matthew 17: 21 and 23: 13.

The work on the Old Testament was a more puzzling problem. Hebrew scholars found it a much more difficult matter to get close to any original manuscript of the Old Testament; the best that could be found being the Massoretic text of the ninth century A. D. This of course was compared with the Septuagint version in the Greek, which differs considerably. When the meaning of

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[13]Dean Alford had made a complete revision of the text by 1869.

[14]Westcott and Hort spent twenty-eight years on their Greek Testament.

the text was obscure internal evidence had to be resorted to. It is just here that the great advance in very recent years in bringing to light the historical background has helped so much in the interpretation of the Old Testament. This had begun when the revisers went to work but they had by no means at hand all the data known by twentieth century scholars.

When it came to the translation itself and the alterations from the Authorized Version, the revisers were governed by the five rules: (1) to change the words if positively required by a change in the best texts, or (2) when the old version was obviously incorrect, or (3) when the meaning was obscure or ambiguous, or (4) when it was inconsistent with the rendering in other passages, or (5) when it was necessary in order to make the whole work consistent. An example of the first is the omission of verse 21 in Matthew 17. Examples of the second are the change in the rendering of Isaiah 9: 1, the Authorized Version reading "and afterwards did more grievously afflict her," the Revised Version, "in the latter time hath he made it glorious"; and Proverbs 27: 4 says in the Authorized Version that "anger is outrageous," in the Revised Version it is "overwhelming." Another type of incorrect rendering is found in II Timothy 3: 16 and I Corinthians 11: 29 where doctrinal errors were involved. The Westminster Confession used the first passage as rendered by the Authorized Version to support their doctrine

of verbal inspiration: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine," whereas the Revised Version has the real meaning when it reads: "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching." The translation of the Corinthian passage made in 1611 has frightened many an oversensitive soul with the threat of "damnation." The revisers put it more mildly and truthfully for our day with the word "judgment," for the English word to "damn" in the sixteenth century meant no more than to "judge."[15] Some of these examples of incorrect impression are closely connected with the use of tenses, a slight change often making the meaning of the words obscure or ambiguous. Another example of this is Exodus 7: 13. The Authorized Version says God "hardened Pharaoh's heart"; the Revised Version more correctly, "And Pharaoh's heart was hardened." The revisers tried in other places to straighten out the verbs. The seventeenth chapter of John is full of these corrected tenses. The twentieth verse is a fair sample: the Authorized Version has, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word," while the Revised Version gives the present, "for them also that believe on me."

Examples under the third rule are the substitution of the phrase "to plough" for the obsolete one "to ear," or "the friendship of the Lord" for

[15]For change in the meaning of words see Davies, T. L. O., *Bible English* (London, 1875).

"the secret of the Lord" in Psalm 25 : 14. Another change for the better is the use of the word "nations" for "Gentiles."

Under the rules for inconsistencies can be cited the practice of the Authorized Version in the Gospels of departing from strict Greek usage in translating the Greek word εὐθέως, εὐθύς by three English words, "immediately," "forthwith," and "straightway," as for instance in Matthew 4:20 and 22 and Mark 1 : 29 and 43.

Prepositions, particles, and articles they endeavoured to make more consistent and accurate. They tried also to represent the parallelism of Hebrew poetry in passages obviously poetical and to make as inconspicuous as possible the breaking up of the text into chapters and verses and yet retain the valuable reference numbers. They did away with the old chapter headings and chronology and corrected the punctuation and paragraphing. Improvements are obvious. But while the English revisers especially were very conservative, retaining for example "Lord" where the Deity is mentioned in the Old Testament, and not touching many of the phrases and constructions which had already passed out of ordinary speech, yet they made some quite unnecessary changes, seeming to prefer the Latin and Greek derivatives to plain Anglo-Saxon terms, like "verity" for "truth,"[16] "finished" for "ended,"[17] or a more classic render-

[16] I Tim. 2:7.

[17] Gen. 2:2.

ing like "epistle" for "letter."[18] This unfortunately gives the revision a stilted and pedantic tone.

But with it all the revisers had such reverence for the great work of the scholars of the past that they frankly stated they were not making a new translation but simply revising the old. They realized the great difficulty of their task, stating in their preface to the first edition that "all endeavours to translate the Holy Scriptures into another tongue must fall short of their aim when the obligation is imposed of producing a version that shall be alike literal and idiomatic, faithful to each thought of the original, and yet in the expression of it, harmonious and free." They were most faithful and conscientious in their arduous task.

The first edition of the New Testament was published in 1881, ten years and a half having been spent on it. As a rule a session of four days was held every month except during August and September, going over the Authorized Version "carefully and minutely, line by line."[19] The Old Testament took longer to complete, fourteen years being spent upon it, the whole Bible not coming out until 1885. The Hebrew scholars held sessions usually of ten days' length, six hours a day, completing their work in eighty-five sessions. Some of the members of these committees died before the work

[18]Acts 23:25. For other references see Hoare, *Our English Bible*, p. 310.

[19]The American revisers gave practically the same amount of time after they were appointed, although beginning a year later.

was all done. When it appeared it was considered a triumph of scholarship and was eagerly bought by people of scholarly bent, three million copies being sold the first year. It was received rather coolly, however, by the public at large, being a version for the educated, not for the masses. Even the scholarly, while appreciating the painstaking and suggestive work of the revisers, have been somewhat disturbed by the mongrel English.

The American members of the committees took exception to what they considered the ultra-conservatism of the British members and the lack of cordial acceptance of their suggestions, the English having put many of their proposed changes in the margin or in an appendix instead of incorporating them in the text. Therefore in 1901 an American edition was issued called the American Standard Revision. This has gradually gained a foothold in the United States until it is quite largely used in modern pulpits, schools, and colleges.

There is, however, a general recognition that English style has been sacrificed. The Revised Version is not a book of literary excellence. It is accurate rather than beautiful, yet to-day we can say not even truly accurate, for much improvement has since been made in linguistic and historical studies. The revisers themselves in their preface acknowledged the impossibility of their measuring up to the incomparable style of Tyndale and his followers, for speaking of the Authorized Ver-

sion they said, "The foundation was laid by William Tyndale. His translation of the New Testament was the true primary version . . . and the longer we have been engaged upon it the more we have learned to admire its simplicity, its dignity, its power, its happy turns of expression, its general accuracy and, we must not fail to add, the music of its cadences, and the felicities of its rhythm."

It is doubtful if such a stupendous effort will ever be put forth again as these faithful revisers put forth during fourteen years, sitting in the Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster or the Bible House in New York, patiently working over together every word and line of the whole Bible. For this reason it seems the more questionable whether any future effort at revision will dislodge the King James Version from its superior seat of excellence among English versions.

CHAPTER VI

THE PRESENT ERA

The Situation To-day

MUCH has happened within the last fifty years. The world is not the same as it seemed to the people of London when Queen Victoria opened the first World's Fair in the Crystal Palace in 1851, nor as it appeared to the people of the United States at the Philadelphia Centennial of 1876. We have had many World's Fairs since then and each one has exhibited less provincialism and more of a world-wide intelligence.

America has conquered her frontiers, has passed the pioneer stage of nominally free homesteads for the sake of settlement, has pushed her railroads across the continent, has reduced her territories one by one to states. The hey-day of electric car service has come and gone and the automobile has become the popular mode of travel. The postal service has sent its rural delivery into remote country places, the telephone has done away with the isolation of farmers, and the radio has brought information and entertainment. Industrialism has grown enormously, bringing to our shores such numbers of immigrants from all over the world

that while we are nominally an English-speaking country, with standards of culture originally English, practically our speech and our standards are of the most mixed variety, sometimes expressed in soft and musical tones but often unchastened and raucous. "Big business" has crowded out the small trader. Coöperative and consolidated organizations are the order of the day. International trade and international politics are the popular topics of discussion. The scale of living has advanced to such an extent that comforts and luxuries of all sorts are expected in every home. Labour and capital have come to close grips as to rights and privileges.

The Great War has brought in its wake disillusionment of many kinds. "The divine right of kings" is no longer held anywhere. Kings are merely left-overs of a past régime. So far has the reaction gone that serious consideration has been given to striking out the words "king" and "war" in our religious songs. The people are in the saddle even if the methods of governing the people are rather problematical. Education has become a popular demand, but largely for utilitarian rather than cultural ends. The classics have had to give way to practical courses in the application of scientific discoveries. Science has pushed her boundaries so far that she seems now to include the major part of the field of knowledge. Education is a big business, too; schools and universities enroll students by the thousand and colleges must have

expensive plants and million dollar endowments. Mark Hopkins on a log will no longer suffice as an ideal for teaching, notwithstanding the renewed emphasis upon the need of teachers as well as research workers. The spirit of adventure finds its outlet in airplane flights and Arctic expeditions.

And with it all has come a break-down of Victorian usages in society. A freedom between sexes, professed equality of economic and political opportunity, never known before on the present world-wide scale, have been more or less upsetting to home and public standards of life and discipline. Definitions of morality have changed. Paganism and Christianity are getting mixed in theory as well as practice. Societies and cults of all sorts, boasting a birth in far-away fascinating lands, have lured many from the staid ways of the Church into "free thought" and free actions. Churches must compete with pleasure-parks and movies for their congregations. Popular skepticism concerning the primary values asserted without question a half-century ago leads men to "play safe" on eternal happiness along the road of human kindness or with an ethic that will "get by," rather than by means of church-going and hymn-singing. Contributions to missions have fallen off, for why proselytize when any religion may be as good as another?

Yet this is only part of the picture. The religious spirit is alive although very varied in its manifestation. Eclecticism runs up squarely against a pointed protest in conservative quarters. "Fundamental-

ism" dictates its seven dogmas for salvation while Liberalism smiles indifferently. Sectarianism is breaking down everywhere except within the Church and even there it is only whispered, for the Church is finding it hard to win adherents on this ground. Yet religion is a much discussed subject. Materialism is getting punctured severely as a philosophy of life. There is amazing frankness and open-mindedness on religious subjects in current periodical literature. There is a hunger for some saving truth to live by, manifested by attendance at innumerable religious conferences and by a large out-put of religious books with modern titles. The idealism of youth is fresh, vigorous, and earnest while discarding much of the old phraseology because it is not understood and seems unreal and unattractive. Young people are impatient with meaningless form, but eager to accept a high challenge. This generation is drawing a sharp line between ecclesiastical Christianity and the spirit of Jesus. "Brotherly love" is a watchword not to be gainsaid even in wordly wise circles. But mere social service propaganda is wearing itself thin, and among the thoughtful there is a feeling after the Unknown God, expressed in modern terms, a real Power to guide and inspire life and to hold one to ideals when human nature breaks down. It is no longer fashionable to sing the old complaints about this world as a vale of tears. People as a whole wish to be "game" in meeting life's ups and downs, yet they are acknowledging in various ways their

need of help to do it and are groping as they may for the gleam of light to guide them. When a leader appears with a sure and certain note and the humility wrought in the fires of experience he has a following.

The Place of the Bible in the Life of To-day

And what of the Bible? The answer must be that there is an amazing popular ignorance. In America, where Church and State are separate, the public school system provides no means for education in the Bible. The modern organization of the home finds no time nor inclination for the old-fashioned "family altar." The Sunday school gathers in only a small proportion of children for indifferent instruction a few minutes once a week. As a consequence students appear at college doors looking at the Bible as quite unnecessary for either utilitarian or cultural purposes and as rather a fetish of old-fashioned pious parents. Yet the "King's English" as illustrated by biblical phrases still hangs over in popular parlance, often unwittingly. We may escape some disaster with "the skin of our teeth" and credit the reference to Shakespeare rather than Job. We may hear the quotation "Peace, peace—but there is no peace!" and think someone said it in the Great War. We may know that *Samson and Delilah* is a noted opera and never have read the account in the book of Judges. Many people who pride themselves upon acquaintance

with books are quite unaware of the source of such phrases as "clear as crystal," "hip and thigh," "the sweat of his brow," "highways and hedges," "to lick the dust," "a word in season," "a broken reed," "weighed in the balance and found wanting." So deep is this popular ignorance of the Bible as a book of literature—our greatest book of literature—that at least one of our large universities requires an examination in it before a student can receive a B. A. degree in language, history, or literature.

And so alarming has been the lack of education in the basic principles of morals and religion that earnest church people have been fostering a nation-wide movement known as "week-day religious education," endeavouring to secure the attendance of public school children one hour at least during the school week. To serve as a means of popular education the Federation of Churches has made an alliance with the great movie directors in the production of biblical films. The desire for the dramatic has been seized upon by the churches in presenting religious plays and pageants of all sorts, while the zeal of another group has tried to capture the street. The traveller in a subway car may look up to the row of advertisements opposite him and find a Bible verse wedged in between Cuticura Soap and Kellogg's Corn Flakes, or from his automobile catch a flash of a Bible sentence painted white against a rock.

Some of these seem frantic efforts, quite mis-

placed and without effect, to correct a deep-seated trouble. The air is electric with new interests. This is no longer a world of one book, and the books that appeal are modern. The Bible to many seems as archaic as an ancestor's portrait in ruff and wig, for the English of 1611 is not the English of to-day and the version of 1885 is not colloquial. Biblical phrases rich in content to our fathers have become meaningless to this generation. In the pulpit expositional sermons are displaced by current events and public Scripture reading has become trite. Familiarity with mere words wrenched from their context and arousing wrong or partially wrong suggestions is not an adequate remedy.

But again, this is only part of the picture. Never in the history of biblical teaching have the rich results of scholarship been put in so attractive form. Scholars are learning how to interpret the text so that its literary beauty and superb expression can be appreciated in English. The uplift of its messages is being caught by a class of people who have found dogmatic theology repulsive. Cultured people who come in contact with such books and such teaching are reviving their interest in the Bible, and college students who have an adequate presentation of it as wonderful literature are heartily responding to its fascination and inspiration.

And another and very significant attempt to correct popular ignorance is manifest in the present rather remarkable outburst of vernacular transla-

tions of the Bible. It is significant for several reasons, because it represents an enormous amount of scholarly industry, because scholars are sensing a popular need in a practical way, and because the reception of these translations by the public has been cordial enough to warrant a prophecy.

Fifty years has shown as much progress in biblical studies, historical and linguistic, as in any other branch of learning. Ministers' libraries of a half century ago are as out of date as those of science teachers. Advanced biblical students discard not only a large proportion of the supposed facts in the older encyclopedias but they have adopted a more scientific method of testing their facts. The whole foundation of their judgment has shifted to another rock as they have found the former basis of "a closed canon" and "an infallible rule" crumbling beneath them. It is true this has been a ruthlessly critical age and it has handled roughly some of the sacred traditions. Passion for truth has outrun loyalties of sentiment, and people as a whole have not yet made the shift from a Bible every word considered sacred, to a Bible held as a guiding star only because it shows the development of great religious thoughts.

Just here is the problem of the modern scholar. His own pipes to the fountain have all been laid afresh during these fifty years and are working well. How can he re-lay the pipes of the public fountain and still keep the water flowing and the spring clear? How can he induce many who have sought

their supply at distant springs to appreciate anew the value of their own life-giving stream? Moreover biblical students have been accomplishing a feat in a half century which the populace is now undertaking suddenly and at a bound. The scholar's mind has been stretched by years of discipline to appreciate old civilizations and historic cultures, while the mind of the people has been local and provincial. Now an international world with many ancient civilizations is opening up to every trader, traveller, and reader. It is the scholar's opportunity to strike hands with the people. He has been searching for the means to break the popular spell of indifference to the Bible, and to awaken anew an appreciation of the importance of its message in solving modern problems and he has begun to realize that the language he uses must be the language which is understood in order to convey the truth which is universal.

New Translations of the Bible

And so such scholars as Weymouth, Moffatt, and Goodspeed have undertaken the hard task of once more bridging a chasm between the Bible and the people. It is the same task which Wyclif and Tyndale undertook under different circumstances. How have they succeeded?

The New Testament has received most attention but Moffatt's Bible and the American Translation, edited by Dr. J. M. P. Smith of Chicago

University, contain the whole of the Old. Commentators have also been publishing translations of Old Testament sections which no student can afford to miss, and others have rearranged former versions with the help of their modern knowledge of literary form.

As we look back over the centuries we find that there has been a constant stream of isolated attempts at translations of the New Testament. A list of New Testaments compiled in 1925[1] enumerates one hundred and sixty-one since Tyndale. But twenty-nine of these, the majority American, have appeared since 1900, when *The Twentieth Century New Testament* was published. This increase in the attempt is significant as well as the reputation for scholarship of the men who have undertaken the task in recent years. Not all of these translations will live, for they vary in excellence as well as in faults. Great praise, however, is due some of them. Six outstanding ones are here selected for mention.

The Twentieth Century New Testament was the first of the recent translations to occasion much remark. It appeared anonymously in 1899 and was made by several scholars in collaboration. The preface says, "The retention of a form of English no longer in common use not only gives the impression that the contents of the Bible have little to do with the life of our own day, but also requires the ex-

[1]See *English Versions of the New Testament,* Madison, J. V. *Journal of Biblical Literature* Vol. XLIV, 1925, III, IV.

penditure of much time and labour on the part of those who wish to understand or explain it." The hand of real scholarship was plainly recognizable here with a laudable attempt to break loose from convention in a dignified way.

Weymouth's New Testament in Modern Speech appeared in London in 1903 and is "an idiomatic translation into every-day speech." Dr. Weymouth was a layman, a graduate of University College, London, and an excellent Greek scholar. Perhaps his experience as headmaster of two boys' schools gave him an understanding of the need of idiomatic language to make the Bible attractive to youth. But here again great pains were taken to preserve dignity of diction and the atmosphere of reverence. These desiderata were never sacrificed for the sake of colloquialism, and this rendering has been commended as "a great aid in making clear and meaningful the spiritual concepts originally expressed in Greek." By many it is the translation preferred of all the modern ones because of these characteristics. Dr. Weymouth died in 1902. A revision was made in 1924 by three English scholars.

The New Testament, A New Translation, by Dr. James Moffatt, has been one of the most popular renderings. Dr. Moffatt is a Scotsman, educated at Glasgow and Oxford. He has been a professor at both places and is now teaching at Union Seminary, New York. This New Testament was first published in 1913 and in 1924 a translation of the Old Testament appeared. The New

Testament was published in 1922 in parallel form with the Authorized Version. In his introduction the translator says, "My intention has been to produce a version which will to some degree represent the gains of recent lexical research and also prove readable." His translation of the entire Bible can now be obtained in a single volume. Dr. Moffatt has been much more free in departing from conventional usage, and is very suggestive, although in some places a little startling and not always smooth. His New Testament excels the Old and naturally, for first of all he is a New Testament scholar.

The Riverside New Testament: a Translation from the Original Greek into the English of To-day, by William G. Ballentine, was published in 1923. Dr. Ballentine is an Oberlin man and was for some time professor in the Young Men's Christian Association College at Springfield, Massachusetts. He says in his preface, "In the English phrasing originality has neither been sought nor shunned . . . The ideal of a translator is to serve as a plate-glass window through which the man who does not read Greek will see in English just what he would see if he did read Greek." He sticks more closely to the Authorized Version than some others, but has now and again very beautiful renderings of his own. From the standpoint of bookmaking his New Testament is a joy. With complete departure from the interruption of verse divisions and a two-column page, the text appeals to the eye and the

book may stand on the library shelf without disparity alongside other "Riverside" classics.

The New Testament: An American Translation, by Edgar J. Goodspeed, was published the same year. This vies with Dr. Moffatt's version in popularity. Dr. Goodspeed is a man from the Middle West, having been Professor of Biblical and Patristic Greek for a good many years in the University of Chicago. This translation came out serially in a number of newspapers and in many respects is more free in its departure from conventional phraseology than any other modern rendering. At the same time one instinctively feels the penetrating pointedness of a scholar very familiar with the original. Dr. Goodspeed says that "to forget the King James English" is "the hardest and yet the most important thing for the modern translator to do."

In 1927 the University of Chicago also published *The Old Testament, An American Translation.* The editor of this volume and translator of much of it is Dr. J. M. P. Smith, an Englishman by birth but educated in our Middle West, coming under the spell of the enthusiastic teacher of Hebrew, Dr. Harper, and himself being a teacher in Chicago University since 1905. He was aided in this undertaking by three younger scholars. Dr. Alexander R. Gordon is Professor of Hebrew in McGill University, Montreal. He was born and educated in Scotland, having had a valuable experience as a minister before crossing the ocean. Dr.

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EDGAR J. GOODSPEED

JAMES MOFFATT

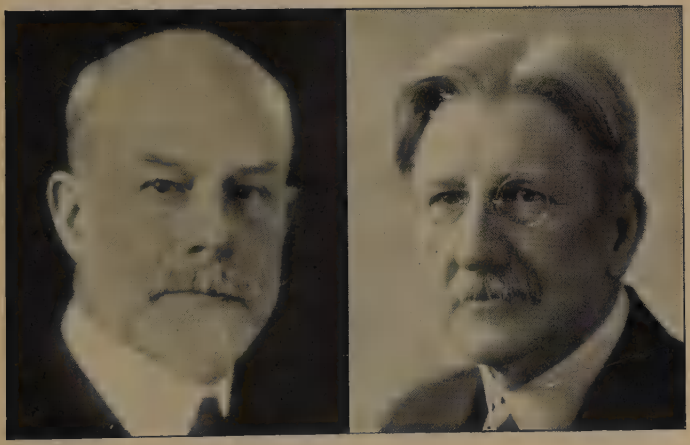

Photo by Bachrach

WILLIAM G. BALLANTINE

J. M. POWIS SMITH

Theophile J. Meek is a Canadian who gained his Ph. D. at Chicago and is now Professor of Oriental Languages at the University of Toronto. Dr. Leroy Waterman is another man who gained his doctorate under Dr. Smith and now holds the chair of Semitics at the University of Michigan.

Dr. Smith says in his introduction that "the most urgent demand for a new translation comes from the field of Hebrew scholarship" and he enumerates the many respects in which advance has been made and adds that "the English of King James' day is not wholly natural or clear to the average man at the present time."

This version of the Old Testament is a most interesting volume, an achievement of up-to-date scholarship in the translation of the words and the pleasing presentation of the poetical sections as poetry, in the paragraphing, and the headings of sections. In reading it one feels that the work has been done as the editor says a translator's best work must be done, "in sympathy with his subject matter," putting himself "into mental and spiritual contact with its authors." He also says: "a translation should read well. It should be in a vocabulary and style appropriate to the thought which it is designed to express. If the original be dignified, impressive, and eloquent, those qualities must not be lacking in the translation; if it be trivial, commonplace, and prosaic, the translation must take on the same character. The content of the Old Testament is, with little exception, upon a high

literary plane. The language of the translation, therefore, cannot be allowed to fall to the level of the street." The reader must acknowledge that this translation "reads well."

A seventh version, the *Centenary Translation of the New Testament,* was issued in 1923 in commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of the American Baptist Church. Mrs. Helen Barrett Montgomery, the translator, is a graduate of Wellesley College and has been a distinguished leader in the affairs of her denomination, presiding one year at its national convention. She follows worthily in the footsteps of an earlier woman of scholarly attainments, Julia Smith, of Hartford, Connecticut, who in 1876 published a new translation not only of the New Testament but of the entire Bible, from the original tongues, and of Helen Spurrill who in 1885 made a translation of the Old Testament "from the unpointed Hebrew."

Attention should also be called to the fact that modern Jewish scholars have recently published a new translation of the Old Testament, for as the preface declares, "the Jew cannot afford to have his Bible translation prepared for him by others." Two Jewish scholars who have done notable work in advancing modern scholarship have headed this undertaking, the late Dr. Morris Jastrow and Dr. Max Margolis. The initial steps were taken in 1892 by the Jewish Publication Society, the actual appearance of the book, however, being delayed until 1917. The editorial board has consisted of

American Jewish scholars representing their Publication Society and their Conference of Rabbis in this country.

While this version does not pretend to be a rendering into colloquial English the editors state: "We have applied ourselves to the sacred task of preparing a new translation of the Bible in the English language, which, unless all signs fail, is to become the current speech of the majority of the children of Israel . . . If a new country and a new language metamorphose him (the Jew) into a new man, the duty of this new man is to prepare a new garb and a new method of expression for what is most sacred and dear to him . . . We are deeply grateful for the works of our non-Jewish predecessors, such as the Authorized Version with its admirable diction, which can never be surpassed, as well as for the Revised Version with its ample learning—but they are not ours . . . The present translation gives to the Jewish world a translation of the Scriptures done by men imbued with the Jewish consciousness, while the non-Jewish world, it is hoped, will welcome a translation that presents many passages from the Jewish traditional point of view."

The Relative Worth of These Translations

In estimating the worth of these modern versions one must bear in mind the difference between an accurate, scholarly translation and a book of literature. Making a translation is a science, mak-

ing literature is an art to be bound as little by too much learning as by too much convention. It is the height of skill to translate well and also to write well. Tyndale was such a consummate genius and the Authorized Version, building upon Tyndale, is the fruit of the rarely gifted Elizabethan period. Some think it too much to expect its equal again. Yet estimates of the best recent versions have been highly commendatory as well as critical. Moreover, the New Testament has been proved by recent discoveries of Greek papyri to have been originally intended not for literary people but for the common folk, in the plainest language, and undoubtedly this was true of the Old Testament also. Yet that this need not preclude a book of literature springing from the pen of a common man John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is a witness. And we have a right to look for real literature in an English Bible when we possess already the superb King James Version. We must perforce compare these recent translations with the best of the past. In judging any English Bible, however, we must not forget the Old and New Testaments in the original. The New Testament is an attempt to express Hebrew thought in a foreign Greek dress. The Bible's greatest masterpieces as literature are in the Old Testament and it is on the eloquence, poetry and subtle satire of the Hebrew prophets that our finest English writers and orators have whetted their style.

The gains of the new translations are in clear,

plain language, striking home to the modern mind, and also in the form of the book, printed like other books. Yet Latin derivatives increase and vivid figures diminish, despite the fact that Latin words are the language of abstractions which the Hebrews did not possess, who revelled instead in picturesque symbols. These versions are excellent as commentaries yet exactness sometimes fails and notwithstanding attempts to present poetry as such the original cadences often seem lost. These translations are thus criticized from two standpoints, one that their English style is often commonplace, revealing brilliancy in spots but rough and uneven, sometimes quite jarring to the musically attuned ear; and again that they are not precise enough to be absolutely representative of scholarship, that in the attempt to render a popular reading a sacrifice has sometimes been made of accuracy.

Some readers have been frankly offended, using such vigorous characterization as "stark vulgarity," "a distinct disservice," "well-nigh unforgivable," "destroying the rich language of reverence," "decked out in the literary frippery of the moderns." Others have been full of praise. Here are a few of the commendatory phrases: "A genuine service has been rendered," "They will all help toward that new and definite Revised English New Testament which we hope before many years will be given us by the consensus of the best authorities." Of Dr. Moffatt's, "It has gained inestimably in freshness and force," "a

vivid and illuminating rendering," "a monumental work," "a noble contribution," "made by the man most ably prepared to translate it." Dr. Goodspeed's translation has been said to achieve "a texture of present-day English so clear and so simple that it deserves to take its place as a standard of English prose as we speak it to-day." Of Dr. Ballentine's we read, "I cannot speak with sufficient appreciation of the beauty of the translation." "It is in every way a charming book . . . in such clear limpid English that never for a moment is there question of the meaning of a passage." "We are charmed with the grace and dignity of the version."

Many people have found new interest in the Bible by reading these texts and preachers have seen new suggestions for up-to-date sermons. Such renderings as these are examples: "I myself never hung as a *dead weight*" (II Cor. 12:13, Weymouth); "Do not worry." (Matt. 6:31, Goodspeed); "Where wear-and-tear destroy" (Matt. 6:19, Weymouth). The following is rather startling: "My mind is made up to *tackle* certain people" (II Cor. 10:2, Moffatt). This one gives a new slant upon the ever-present "devil": "You *foul spirit,* come out of this man" (Mark 5:8, Goodspeed).[2] Another is found in Gen. 30:11, "Zilpah, Leah's maid, bore Jacob a son, whereupon Leah said 'How lucky!' So she called his name Gad (luck)" (Dr. Meek). Perhaps this was one of the

[2]See Luccock, H. E., *Preaching Values.*

passages meant by the reviewer who said he "trusts the use of the new version will be restricted to the few who insist on scrupulous accuracy."

At any rate criticism is easier than construction and these scholarly translators might well quote Tyndale: "If any man find fault either with the translation or aught beside (which is easier for many to do than so well to have translated it themselves of their own pregnant wits) to the same it shall be lawful to translate it themselves."

Will these translations live? Time alone can tell. They are at least serving a present purpose of real value in drawing many people back to reading the Bible, and showing many others something of the true character and meaning of the original, and its vital message for our own day. We may well close this chapter by quoting a paragraph from the preface of the Authorized Version: "Zeal to promote the common good, whether it be by devising anything ourselves, or revising that which hath been laboured by others, deserveth certainly much respect and esteem, but yet findeth but cold entertainment in the world. It is welcomed with suspicion instead of love and with emulation instead of thanks; and if there be any hole left for cavil to enter (and cavil, if it do not find a hole, will make one) it is sure to be misconstrued, and in danger to be condemned . . . For was there ever anything projected, that savoured anyway of newness or renewing, but the same endured many a storm of gainsaying or opposition?"

CHAPTER VII

DARE WE PROPHESY?

The Unquestioned Excellence of the King James Version

THE romance of the English Bible is not finished. Those who have been brought up on the Authorized Version say with Dr. Scrivener that they "cannot fail to marvel at the perfect and easy command over the English language exhibited by its authors on every page. The fullness and variety of their diction, the raciness of their idiomatic resources, seem almost to defy imitation."[1] We say with Dr. Hoare, "In point of sheer excellence it is hardly conceivable that the Bible of 1611 will ever be surpassed." To some minds it has seemed presumptuous to undertake a translation into modern English because the Authorized Version is a classic, our greatest classic. To others it has seemed hopeless because the height of its excellence is so superb, towering above other attempts like the Alps above the little hills.

The answer to both classes of critics is this: the Bible is the Bible, a book of divine inspiration for

[1]Scrivener, F. H. A., *The Authorized Version of the English Bible.*

life, full of that creative energy which Truth possesses. To have such a force locked away from the common people is a crime, one of the crimes of exclusiveness committed by the aristocracy of culture. It is precisely the same answer which Wyclif and Tyndale made, that the people who make up a nation cannot be made stable in the truth unless they see plainly the teaching of the Bible in words with which they are at home.

The Need of a New Vernacular Translation

This fact is driving modern scholars to attempt again the task of a vernacular translation. The right of the laity to understand the Bible is the fundamental tenet of Protestantism. If the modern popular demand for a distinction between the spirit of Jesus and ecclesiastical form is to be truly satisfied, the common man must be able to find for himself what the teaching of Jesus is. This divine right of the common man to find reality is as powerful to-day in moving scholars to translate the Bible afresh as "the divine right of kings" was powerful in King James' mind when he set his scholars at work.

It is moreover an inalienable right recognized by all broadminded scholars. A noted historian has recently summed up the matter thus for historical specialists: "The serious reading public is no longer the upper or the middle class as such, but clever persons of all classes. The problem of historical

writing to-day is, therefore, to establish a satisfactory contact between the academically trained historians and those who should be their readers, scattered all over the country in various callings and stations of life. It is not altogether an easy task . . . To-day the writers may sometimes be too academic and the readers not academic enough for purposes of mutual understanding . . . Both schoolmasters and ordinary readers are asking historians not to be merely learned but to remember the hungry sheep."[2]

Broadminded Christian scholars in all lines are thus accepting the rôle of shepherds of the sheep. They are sensing the meaning of the great prophet's denunciation of false shepherds: "Woe unto the shepherds that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the sheep? They were scattered, because there was no shepherd; and they became food to all the beasts of the field, and were scattered . . . neither did my shepherds search for my sheep, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my sheep."[3]

Is this the meaning of democratic education? Since the Great War educators have become alarmed at the way propaganda of all sorts has crept into our schools and the people have become a prey to partial or false teaching. For this reason students of democracy have become cynical con-

[2]Trevelyan, George M., *The Present Position of History.* An Inaugural Lecture delivered at Cambridge, October 26, 1927.

[3]Ezek. 34:2-9. Compare Milton's *Lycidas,* "The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed."

cerning its effectiveness in government. Educated religious people have waked up with surprise at the indifference, superstition, and paganism that have subtly crept into our so-called Christian land. The remedy seems to be not less education, but more, not colleges for the few but for the many, not utilitarianism as an end but Truth, not superficial scholarship but sound learning placed at the disposal of the people.

And it applies to the study of the Bible quite as much as to any other literature or history. The same historian quoted above says that "the great value of the classical education upon which England throve so well from the time of Colet until almost our own day, was the quality of the books which it put into the hands of students." Moreover, we have seen that the chief motive behind Colet's brilliant lectures was to give the Bible to the people in a form they could understand, which would thrill them with the same vital power with which he had been thrilled when he went to Italy and caught a breath of Savonarola's passion for Scripture.

This appreciation of the function of the scholar as a shepherd of the people was wonderfully exhibited in a more recent son of Oxford. "The significance of Jowett's *Plato* is that in a time when modern philosophy was undergoing profound transformations in method and point of view, Jowett restored for the ordinary person who could not read Greek a very vivid sense of a similar period

in the ancient world . . . and the work as a whole indicated how beautifully a monument of Greek genius could be rendered into English without loss of effect in beauty or idea."[4] Another such book is the Bible. In its original tongues it is great literature in its high reach, its simplicity, and its lyric quality of expression, in its tonic values to mind and soul. It, too, should be rendered into English without loss of effect in beauty or idea, that the ordinary person who cannot read Greek or Hebrew may receive a vivid sense of its message.

That the King James Version does not do this for the modern ordinary person is quite apparent when one reads it carefully, noting the words and phrases which have either become obsolete or so changed in their content of meaning that they convey a different tinge entirely to the sense originally intended. What average modern reader would understand these renderings:

"Esau was a *cunning* (skillful) hunter" (Gen. 25:27).

"David is a *cunning* player on a harp" (I Sam. 16:16).

Yet in the New Testament the word is used with its present significance: "cunning craftiness" (Eph. 4:14).

"The hole of an *habergeon* (a small coat of mail)" (Ex. 28:32. See also II Chron. 26:14 and elsewhere).

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[4]Knickerbocker, W. S., *Creative Oxford,* Ch. VI, Benjamin Jowett.

"Achan wrought *folly* (wickedness) in Israel" (Josh. 7:15).

"At the *banquet* (the dessert) of wine" (Esther 7:2).

"The water is *naught* (worthless)" (II Kings 2:19) and "it is *naught,* it is *naught,* saith the buyer" (Prov. 20:14).

"I will punish the fruit of the *stout* (proud) heart" (Is. 10:12; see also Mal. 3:13).

"Joseph was a *goodly* person and *well-favoured*" (Gen. 39:6). Both these words mean "good-looking."

"If a soul sin, if he do not *utter* it (put it away) then he shall bear his iniquity" (Lev. 5:1).

"Why should he see your faces worse *liking* (looking)?" (Dan. 1:10).

"Besides that which *chapmen* (traders) and merchants brought" (II Chron. 9:14). This word has the same origin as the word "cheap" which originally was a noun, meaning a "market."

"And they shall pass through it *hardly bestead*" (with great difficulty) (Is. 8:21).

And in the New Testament:

"Let us make him three *tabernacles*" (booths or shelters) (Matt. 17:4).

"In my Father's house are many *mansions*" (dwellings) (John 14:2).

"The *chief rooms*" (places at the table) (Luke 14:7).

Also "the lowest *room*" (place) (Luke 14:9).

"And after those days we took up our *carriages*

(baggage), and went up to Jerusalem" (Acts 21: 15).

"*Occupy* (trade or do business) till I come (Luke 19:13).

"Let no man seek his own but every man another's *wealth* (welfare)" (I Cor. 10:24).

"They saw he was a *proper* (promising) child" (Heb. 11:23).

"When tribulation or persecution ariseth . . . *by-and-by* (immediately) he is offended" (Matt. 13: 21).

"*Instant* (urgent) in prayer" (Rom. 12:12).

The use of prepositions in a way we to-day consider incorrect is illustrated by Haggai 2:3, "Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?" Acts 13:36. "For David fell on sleep," and in Luke 3:8, "We have Abraham to our father."

Psalm 109:25 illustrates the archaic use of tenses, "They shake their head." Also Judges 6:38, "They wringed the dew out of the fleece," Acts 12:7, "A light shined in the prison," Luke 24:16, "Their eyes were holden."[5] And many of the words like "ghost" for "spirit," convey an unnatural significance.

These words or constructions were all in current usage when Tyndale and Coverdale were translating. But if we wish our children to be brought up on the Bible, the King James English, choice as it is, will vie with that of the street in making them linguistic criminals.

[5]For other examples consult Davies, T. L. O., *Bible English.*

Despite the fact that certain renderings are more startling than is necessary there is plainly a need of a modern vernacular translation. Praise is due the earnest, devoted scholars who have seen the need and dared to face the disapproval of conservatives, risking their own reputation as linguists and writers in order to put into the hands of the common man a book he will read as he reads any interesting volume, because he finds truth there expressed in plain words such as he is accustomed to.

The Present Era in Creative English

But not even the most enthusiastic reviewer would class any of these vernacular translations with Tyndale's or the King James Version. As we have seen, the age in which they lived was largely responsible for the unique work of Wyclif and of Tyndale. Our present age must bear its part in the appraisal of the task which twentieth century scholars have undertaken. Ours is not an era of creative English but rather of learning to master the tools of research. Scholarship has been passing through the severest discipline in this art and has been so absorbed in its task that there are comparatively few men who have been great enough to emerge without some barnacles of pedantry sticking on their ship.

But we have advanced sufficiently for far-sighted pilots to tell us where we are. Some of these pilots are coming into American waters from other lands.

Perhaps they see our position more clearly than we see it ourselves. Count Keyserling, the philosopher-traveller, tells us that something has happened since he was here before the Great War and that we are at the beginning of a new civilization. Dr. Whitehead, the Oxford-Harvard scientist, tells us that American education needs no smaller ideal than the dangerous gift of *imaginative* scholarship.[6] A British professor of English says that "the United States is now the scene of the severest ordeals, the vividest excitements of our language. Only when we hear English on the lips of Americans do we fear for its integrity; others might drag it down; they alone could lift it into change; they alone speak an actively competitive English. They have the right. . . . The Americans apprehend their world in sharper outlines and aspire after a more salient rendering of it."[7]

Perhaps this accounts for the fact that the majority of the new translations of the Bible within the last twenty-five years have been American.

Viewing the English language and English literature as a whole in connection with the Bible it is well to ponder what Professor de Sélincourt says concerning the future of English, that it depends "above all, on the survival, in its pre-eminence, of the spirit of freedom . . . The life-centre of English is to be found where the spirit of those who

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[6]See Article, "Universities and Their Function," *Atlantic Monthly*, May, 1928.

[7]De Sélincourt, Basil, *Pomona or The Future for English.*

speak it is in closest accord with developing realities, and these cannot reveal themselves to minds fixed in any past, however vital that past may have been when it was present . . . Our English must keep its natural warmth and concreteness, its gift of free response to the fresh fact. These things cannot be preserved. Preserves, it is true, keep indefinitely, but at the sacrifice of freshness; and it is freshness that we want. What we love most in English is just that quality of unsugared sweetness, which is the difference between fruit and jam."

The Prophecy

Now it is these facts as we take a long view of the romance of the English Bible that lead us to a prophecy. The Bible in the original has somehow been so vitalized with power that it has perforce burst all the bounds of local expression and proved itself a universal book. Its flame has caught up the genius of Englishmen and wrought an unparalleled work in the development of a people. But the story of that development is not closed. Neither is the story of the English Bible. It is unthinkable that this book should be laid upon a shelf, honourable as is the shelf of the classics; it is highly improbable that it will become only one book among many worthy books in our libraries. It is *the* Book of books. The tonic of its idealism is needed as much in our sophisticated age as in the days of a narrower Puritanism. Its sanctifying grace is just that last

element demanded to sweeten the bitterness left by our international struggles. It is not a book merely for the cultured, it is Everyman's book. It must come clothed in Everyman's language.

And just here is the warrant for democracy. The book that reaches Everyman is a simple book, yet poetical and beautiful. Life at its heart is beautiful and poetical, the colours and rhythms of art are natural colours and rhythms. If the English language is fast becoming the universal language it has a mission, for with the English, as Professor de Sélincourt tells us, "the poets' task has been the practical one of making language live . . . bringing back to words their primal power and motion" . . . "The percolation of light . . . is assured to the English . . . by the tincture of poetry that irradiates and solidifies their common sense . . . Religion is practised by the English because its truth is known . . . and the vehicle of the discovery has been a collection of mysterious poems and rhapsodies, the words of which there is no holding." These words, then, of our English Bible must be the poetical expression of this modern age in order to bring back "their primal power and motion."

But we have not as yet any great poets in this present era. The "free-verse" school has broken from convention, has triumphed in imagery and impressionism, has boasted of kinship with the Hebrew poets in its emphasis on rhythm of thought rather than a set syllabic structure, but it has produced no great poets. All have fallen short of the

lofty biblical poetry in thought and in expression. John Masefield is possibly an exception in blazing a trail toward the modern poetical, dramatic expression of New Testament scenes. His attempt to revive the old miracle play in the Canterbury Cathedral, his fine versification of *The Trial of Jesus* and *The Coming of Christ* are interesting pointers in the trend of the times so far as the literary world is concerned. But he is not a translator.

Tyndale was a prose-poet, but to-day the translators' discipline has been what Tyndale's was not, one of conventional scholarship, not of poetic freedom. Gleams of it break out here and there in the new versions but only gleams, for the style falls back into dullest prose. The unevenness of these productions is due to the fact that a poetic flash of genius, like a bird let loose from a cage, has soon been drawn back again with a string tied to a heavy cart. The future must give us sustained, untrammelled freedom. There must be an easy mastery of all our words inherited from the Anglo-Saxon and from classic speech. For very much of the commanding quality of the King James English came from the blending of the two with a predominance of the forceful Anglo-Saxon. This is true also of Shakespeare and other great Elizabethan writers. Hebrew and Greek idiom must be fitted to current English idiom. Plain, pithy, suggestive words must make the reader see the point and feel at home. The words we are gathering from the new mixture

of races in this our present era must find their place naturally and smoothly and not seem superimposed, merely adjuncts and afterthoughts. The advantages of freshness and surprise must not lead to gaucheries and crudenesses. There must be a certain polish without the strictness of mere convention. Poetic symbolism and musical cadences must spring naturally and not with artificial effort.

For acceptance to-day there must be a deep sympathy with social backgrounds and needs, an appreciation of the fitness of the biblical message for this side of our experience. The British premier, Stanley Baldwin, has prophesied a greater influence for the Bible in the future than in the past just because "so much of the time in this world we seem to be carrying on our struggle in twilight or fog—friends, and men who ought to be friends, sitting blindly by in the mêlée and wounding men who ought to be brothers. Nothing but the light from that Book can lighten that twilight or dispel the fog." The translator, then, must see that light to express clearly that truth.

But with the light there must be a spiritual consciousness of the "other-worldly" sort. The blending of these two phases of religious life so markedly exhibited in the great prophets and especially in Jesus must be sensed by experience to be understood and adequately expressed. A radiant vision must be caught such as Erasmus had when he said the New Testament pages "will give you Christ Himself . . . in an intimacy so close that he

would be less visible to you if He stood before your eyes."

Our modern translators have to a degree possessed these qualities, together with the ability to handle foreign tongues, but they have been pioneers in a day of literary gestation rather than perfect expression. Soon we shall have a new era in English literature. Imagination and poetry will come to their own. An accurate understanding of the sense of Scripture will be a poetic understanding. The matchless English of Tyndale will never be imitated or repeated, it will simply be matched by some great, future, poetic linguist, socially minded, religiously enthusiastic.

None of the great translations has been produced merely for the love of scholarship and none for the love of fame. None has succeeded as a people's book because ecclesiastics thought the time was ripe for a new version. The Book has appeared only when the times were ready and a great-souled genius has laid his gifts upon the altar, and let the fire of Heaven consume his life. The story of the English Bible is a convincing proof of its inspiration, and inspiration breaks through where it listeth.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Chart of Dates

Authors and Teachers	*Political and Social Events*
1328 (?) Wyclif's birth Chaucer's birth	
1338	
1340 Richard Rolle's Psalter in English	Beginning of the Hundred Years' War
1345 (?) Wyclif enters Oxford	
1348	
1358 or 59 Wyclif becomes Master of Balliol	The Black Death (first appearance)
1361 Wyclif is made Master of Arts Wyclif is given the living of Fillingham	
1369 Wyclif is given the living of Ludershall Wyclif takes degree of B. D.	The Black Death (third appearance)
1372 Wyclif is made Doctor	
1374 Wyclif appointed on Royal Commission to Bruges Conference Wyclif given living of Lutterworth	
1377 Wyclif inaugurated his order of "Poor Priests" (Lollards)	
1378	Pope denounces heresy of Wyclif

1379 Wyclif writes "The Truth of Scripture"	
Wyclif begins his translation	
1380 Wyclif writes his essays on "Transubstantiation"	
Langland's "Piers Plowman" appears	
1381 Wyclif leaves Oxford for permanent residence at Lutterworth	The Great Revolt
1384 Wyclif's death	
1388 Wyclifite Bible completed by Purvey	
1408	Archbishop Arundel forbids unauthorized Bibles
1415 John Huss burned	
1453	Turks take Constantinople
1455 Gutenberg's first printed Latin Bible	
1455–85	Wars of the Roses
1483 Caxton's "Golden Legend" published (earliest portion of Bible printed in English)	
1484 (?) Tyndale's birth	
1485	Burning of Lollards
1489	Thomas Cranmer's birth
1491 Savonarola preaching at Florence — William Grocyn first teacher of Greek at Oxford	
1492	Columbus discovers America
1497	The Cabots discover Newfoundland
1475–1500	First fairly accurate maps of the world
1499 Colet and Erasmus at Oxford	
1500 (?) Tyndale enters Oxford	

1501	Erasmus writes his "Enchiridion"	
1505	Colet leaves Oxford for St. Paul's	
1509	Erasmus writes "In Praise of Folly"	Henry VIII crowned
1511	Erasmus at Cambridge	
1515	Sir Thomas More's "Utopia" appears	
1516	Erasmus publishes his Greek Testament Tyndale goes to Cambridge	
1517	Luther's "Theses" posted	
1521	Tyndale goes to Little Sodbury	Lutheran books burned in London
1522	Luther's German New Testament published	
1523	Tyndale in London	
1524	Tyndale goes to Hamburg	
1525	Tyndale's New Testament appears	
1526		Lutheran books burned again in London (February) Tyndale's New Testament burned in London (October) Henry VIII resolves on divorce
1529		Fall of Wolsey
1530	Tyndale's Pentateuch published	Death of Wolsey More succeeded Wolsey as Lord High Chancellor
1533		Thomas Cranmer made Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cromwell made Chancellor of the Exchequer

1533	continued	Henry VIII marries Anne of Boleyn
1534	Tyndale revises his New Testament	Sir Thomas More and Bishop Fisher sent to the Tower Thomas Cromwell made King's Secretary and Master of the Rolls Convocation petitions the King for an English Bible
1535	Coverdale's Bible published	Thomas Cromwell made Vicar General
1536	Tyndale is martyred	Execution of More, Fisher and Anne of Boleyn "The Ten Articles"
1537	"Matthew's" (Rogers') Bible published "Matthew's" and Coverdale's Bibles authorized	The Pilgrimage of Grace
1539	The Great Bible ("Cromwell's") published	Cromwell made Lord High Chamberlain
1540	The Great Bible, 2nd edition ("Cranmer's") published	Henry VIII marries Anne of Cleves (January 6th) Henry VIII marries Catherine Howard (July 28th) Cromwell executed
1545		Council of Trent
1546	Luther's death	Death of Henry VIII
1547		Edward VI crowned
1548	English Book of Common Prayer published	
1550	Stephanus' third edition of Greek Testament published (became the standard text for England)	
1553		Death of Edward VI Mary Tudor crowned

1555–58		Martyrdom of over 300 Protestants (including Hooper, Ridley and Latimer)
1557	Whittingham's New Testament published at Geneva	
1559		Elizabeth crowned (January)
1560	Geneva Bible published	Mathew Parker made Archbishop
1561	Francis Bacon's birth	
1563		"Thirty-nine Articles"
1564	Shakespeare's birth	
1568	The Bishops' Bible published	
1582	Rheims New Testament published	
1583		Puritan Movement beginning
1590	Spenser's "Faerie Queene" appears	
1597	Bacon's "Essays" published	
1603		Elizabeth's death James I crowned
1608	Milton's birth	
1609	Douay Version of Bible published	
1611	King James (Authorized) Version of Bible published	
1620		Pilgrim Fathers landed in New England
1625		Charles I crowned
1633	"Textus Receptus" published	
1649		Charles I beheaded
1653–58		Oliver Cromwell Protector
1667	Milton's "Paradise Lost" published	

1687	Newton's "Principia" published	
1701	Archbishop Ussher's chronology inserted in the Bible	
1753	Bishop Lowth gives his remarkable lectures on Hebrew Poetry	
1776		Independence of America
1782	First English Bible printed in America	
1800–50	Rise of historical method of studying literature	
1837		Victoria crowned
1849	Dean Alford's Greek Testament (First Volume) published	
1859	Darwin's "Origin of Species" published	
1870		Convocation reported on desirability of a Revised Version Bible
1881	Revised New Testament published	
1885	Revised Version of entire Bible published	
1899	Twentieth Century New Testament published	
1901	American Revision of Bible published	
1903	Weymouth's New Testament published	
1908		Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America founded "to express the fellowship and catholic unity of the Christian Church"
1913	Moffatt's New Testament published	

1914–18		The Great War
1919		League of Nations (started)
1923	Ballantine's Riverside New Testament published	
	Goodspeed's, The New Testament: An American Translation	
1924	Moffatt's Old Testament published	
1927	The Old Testament: An American Translation published	

APPENDIX II

Queer and Interesting Bibles

The Bug Bible. The 1551 edition of "Matthew's" Bible translated Ps. 91 : 5. "Thou shalt not be afraid of any *bugges* (bogies) by night." This was repeated in Coverdale's and Taverner's Bibles.

Jugge's Revision of Tyndale's New Testament, [1552]. (An interesting illustration.)

Devil with wooden leg sowing tares

The Breeches Bible. The Geneva Bible used *breeches* for *aprons* in Gen. 3 : 7. It was not, however, original here, having been employed in Caxton's *Golden Legend* and in the Wyclifite version.

The editions of 1776 and 1778 are the only ones in which *aprons* occurs.

The Place-Maker's Bible. The second edition of the Geneva Bible (1562) had *placemakers* instead of *peacemakers* in Matt. 5:9.

Jesus Church Bible. An edition of the Geneva Bible in which a 1598 Old Testament is bound with a 1597 New Testament "With Two profitable and fruitful Concordances." This Bible has at I John 5:20, *Jesus Church* instead of *Jesus Christ.*

> 20 But wee knowe that the Sonne of God is * come, and hath giuen vs a minde to know him, which is true: and wee are in him that is true, that is, in his Sonne Iesus Church: this same is very ℙ God, and eternall life.

The Goose Bible. The Dort editions of the Geneva Bible were called *Goose Bibles* because a goose was the trademark of the Dort Press.

The Leda Bible. This was a name given to the second edition of the *Bishops' Bible* (1572). For enlivenment of the pages this volume introduced many of the drawings in Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* the illustration of the legend of "Leda and the Swan" being placed before the book of Hebrews. There is a reference to America in the note to Psalm 45:9. "Ophir is thought to be the Ilande in the west coast, of late found by Christopher Colombo; fro whence at this day is brought most fine golde."

The Treacle Bible. The same edition was also called "the treacle Bible" because Jer. 8:22 was translated "is there no *tryacle* (balm) in Gilead?"

The Rosin Bible. The Douay Version of 1609 translated the same word *rosin.*

The Judas Bible. A Geneva Bible of 1610 reading *Judas* for *Jesus* in John 6:67.

The King James Version has a good many printers' mistakes in the earlier editions.

The "He" and "She" Bibles. The first and second editions of 1611 translated Ruth 3:15 respectively "he" and "she," in one case making Boaz enter the city, in the other Ruth. Both of these editions were used as copy until after 1614 when "she" prevailed until the Revised Version appeared. (See marginal note in R. V.)

The Wicked Bible. The 1631 edition left out the negative in the seventh commandment making it read "Thou shalt commit adultery." Three succeeding editions made the same mistake. The printers were fined £300.

The Murderer's Bible. *Murderers* was printed for *murmurers* in Jude 16.

The Soldiers Bible, 1643. "The Souldiers Pocket Bible: containing the most (if not all) those places contained in holy Scripture, which doe shew the qualifications of his inner man, that is a fit Souldier to fight the Lords Battels, both before the fight, in the fight, and after the fight." This was evidently for Cromwell's soldiers, and the passages were taken from the Geneva Bible. Reprints of this pamphlet amounting to 50,000 copies were circulated in the American Civil War.

The Unrighteous Bible. An edition of 1653 made I Cor. 6:9 say "the unrighteous shall inherit the Kingdom of God," called also the *Parliamentary Bible* as it has the Commonwealth arms on title page.

The Oliver Cromwell *Pearl Bible* is a copy of the above, very sumptuous in its binding.

The Thumb Bible. Printed in Aberdeen in 1670, one inch square by half an inch thick.

The Printers' Bible. Cotton Mather states that a Bible appearing some time before 1702 makes the Psalmist say "*Printers* (princes) have persecuted me without a cause." Ps. 119:161.

The Vinegar Bible. The edition of 1716–17 has as the heading for the twentieth chapter of Luke "The Parable of the *Vinegar*" (Vineyard). This was printed very handsomely by J. Baskett of London, but it was so full of mistakes that it was called "a basketful of printers' errors."

The Dagger Bible. An early American edition published in Philadelphia by Jesper Harding inserted the word *dagger* for the reference mark †, making I Kings 1:21 read "The King shall *dagger* sleep."

Hieroglyphick Bible. 1789 (4th ed.) "A curious Hieroglyphic Bible; or select passages in the Old and New Testaments represented with emblematical figures for the amusement of youth; designes chiefly to familiarize tender age, in a pleasing and diverting manner, with early ideas of the Holy Scriptures."-This book was dedicated to "parents, guardians and governesses." It was very popular, thirteen editions being published by 1796. In 1794 the *"New Hieroglyphic Bible"* sold for "1 shilling plain and 2 shillings coloured" and there was a Boston edition. This may be compared with *The Pictorial New Testament for the Young* of 1880; also *Scripture Lessons for Schools.* The latter was based on the British system of mental instruction, and adopted in Russia by order of Emperor Alexander I, originally made in Russia at St. Petersburg and adopted in Russian schools at the instance of the Minister of Instruction. A volume of *Extracts from the Old and New Testaments for Use of Schools in Ireland* was published in 1814.

The Portensian Bible of 1796 was named for Bishop Portens of London; "Chapters of a more spiritual nature are distinguished by the figure (1) printed at the head of each chapter, leading historical chapters by the figure (2), our Lord's Discourses and other chapters of more peculiar interest by a Star."

The Reeves Bible of 1802 was in five volumes. Its design was "to put to press an edition of the Bible in separate volumes, that would make a manual commodious for perusal, like the editions of our best English books.

The Discharge Bible. An edition of 1802 printed *discharge* for *charge* in 1 Tim. 5:21.

To Remain Bible. A Cambridge Bible of 1805 inserted the proof-reader's marginal words "to remain" in Gal. 4:29, making it read "him that was born after the Spirit to remain." This was repeated in two other editions, 1806 and 1819.

The Standing Fishes Bible. An edition of 1806, Ezek. 47:10 reading "The *fishes* (fishers) shall stand upon it." This mistake was repeated in 1813 and 1823.

Ears to Ear Bible. Some cockney must have set up the type of Matt. 13:43 in the Oxford edition of 1807, which charges those who have "ears to ear." It also has *"good works"* for *"dead* works" in Hebrews 9:14.

Thomson's Bible of 1808. Charles Thomson was Secretary to Congress, retiring in 1789 to devote himself to Bible study. This book contains the earliest translation of the Septuagint into English. Thomson was first induced to study Greek when he bought a portion of the LXX at an auction for a few cents, not knowing what it was except that the auctioneer said it had "outlandish letters." In two years he found the remainder and became a Greek scholar.

The Wife Hater Bible. The Oxford edition of 1810 says: "If any man come to me and hate not . . . his own *wife* also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26).

The Rebekah Bible. In 1823 the London printers made Rebekah arise with her *camels* instead of damsels (Gen. 24:61).

The Bassendyne Bible (1576–79) was the first to be printed in Scotland, and for thirty-one years the only one printed there, named for the publisher. The following verses were annexed:

Here is the spring where waters flowe
to quench our heat of sinne;
Here is the tree where trueth doth growe
to lead our lives therein.

. . . . . .

Then be not like the swyne that hath
a pearl at his desire,
And takes more pleasure of the trough
and wallowing in the myre.

Mention should be made of the *Biblia Pauperum* (Bible for the Poor), a picture book for the common people of c. 1450.

In 1828 a Bible was published by the efforts of the Society of Friends in which passages "unsuitable for a mixed audience are printed in italics below the text."

In 1862 the *Queen's Bible* was prepared for the International Exhibition, one of the earliest books to use machinery for composition, although the printing was done by hand.

In 1887 the *Queen's Jubilee Bible* in four volumes was published, a specially bound copy being presented to her majesty, Queen Victoria.

APPENDIX III

American Bibles

First Bibles Printed in America

William Bradford of Philadelphia was the first man to propose an American Bible in 1688.

Cotton Mather spent fifteen years preparing one but could find no one to publish it. He tried English publishers as well as American to no avail. The manuscript lies in the archives of the Massachusetts Historical Society. Another failure was that of *John Fleming,* a Boston printer who advertised that he would deliver twenty pages every fortnight if he succeeded in getting three hundred subscribers. He wanted the paper also to be of American manufacture, and he hoped "to present to this Country as *correct* and *beautiful* an Edition of the Sacred Writings, with Annotations, as has hitherto appeared in Any Part of the World." But the three hundred subscriptions were not forthcoming.

A dearth of books followed the break with England. The Congressional records for 1777–78 show that a committee which had been appointed to consider a memorial presented to Congress concerning the printing of the Bible, reported unfavourably, because "the proper types . . . are not to be had in this country, and the paper cannot be procured." However the importance of securing Bibles was so great that they recommended the importation by Congress of 20,000 Bibles from Holland, Scotland or elsewhere. Seven states were in favour of this recommendation and six against it. A Scotch printer, *Robert Aitken,* had come to Philadelphia in 1769. This discussion led him to publish the New Testament in 1777, with three more editions in '78, '79, and '81. In 1781 he ventured on the whole Bible, securing an endorsement from Congress. This was completed in 1782 in two volumes, a few copies being bound in one. This is the *first American Bible* and

very rare; only thirty-two are known to-day, two in England and thirty in America. Aitken lost heavily in this undertaking, the difficulties he laboured under during this strenuous war period being extreme. Congress refused to grant him exclusive rights of publication, but the Presbyterian Synod of 1783 recommended that everyone purchase his Bibles.

Isaiah Thomas of Worcester was another pioneer printer of American editions of the Bible. His first appeared in 1791 and he offered to receive half the price in "Wheat, Rye, Indian Corn, Butter or Pork," if delivered at his stores in Worcester or Boston by December 20, 1790, "the remaining sum of twenty-one shillings to be paid in Cash, as soon as the books are ready for delivery." This gentleman was most public spirited and was recognized by honorary college degrees and commendation by George Washington.

Isaac Collins of New Jersey printed the New Testament in 1788 and the whole Bible in 1791. Great care was taken, the proofs being read eleven times. Only two errors were ever discovered, a broken letter and a punctuation mark.

Hugh Gaine of New York printed the New Testament in 1790 and the Bible entire in 1792.

Hodge and Campbell issued a Bible with the Psalms in metre in 1792 and *Brown's Self-Interpreting* Bible with a frontispiece by one of our early American engravers, William Dunlap.

William Young of Philadelphia issued a Bible in 1794.

The Cary Bible was published in Philadelphia in 1806.

It is interesting to note that *Benjamin Franklin* proposed a new translation and *Noah Webster,* being dissatisfied with the King James Version, issued a Bible of his own at New Haven in 1833. His changes, however, were of no particular worth. It has been called "a picayune revision." A rather interesting little Bible is one published at Amherst, Mass., in 1834, showing the character of the people and industries of that small village. The type must have been distributed and reset many times. The printers perhaps felt the influence of Amherst College, founded in 1821. This may be seen at the Jones Library, Amherst, the Worcester Antiquarian Society, and elsewhere.

In 1862 there was a New Testament published by the *Confederate States Bible Society* at Atlanta.

For more detailed information see *Early Bibles of America,* by Rev. John Wright, 1834; *Historical Catalogue of the Printed Editions of Holy Scriptures,* by T. H. Darlow and H. F. Moule, 1903; *Short-Title Catalogue of English Books,* 1475–1640, Pollard and Redgrave; *New Schaff–Herzog Encyclopedia,* article "Bibles."

Rare and Curious Bibles to Be Seen in America

One may find almost all the editions of the English Bible in the large libraries of England, such as the British Museum, the Bodleian at Oxford, the Cambridge Library, the John Rylands Library at Manchester, The British and Foreign Bible Society, London. Interesting Bibles are so scattered in America that people do not know where they may easily see some of these volumes. A very partial enumeration of places is appended.

New England. Boston. Congregational Library (includes a *Vinegar Bible*).

Cambridge. Andover Library (large collection).

Harvard College Library, large collection (includes the *Geneva Bible* used on the *Mayflower*).

Hartford. Hartford Seminary.

New Haven. Yale University (a large and splendidly arranged collection).

Providence. John Carter Brown Library (includes an *Aitken Bible*).

Williams College. Chapin Library. Includes a *Leda Bible,* Oliver Cromwell's *Pearl Bible,* and a first edition of Tyndale's *Obedience of a Christian Man,* very early. There is also a copy of the First Issue of the First Edition of Jugge's edition of Tyndale's New Testament, of which only three other perfect copies are known, this edition being called in by Queen Mary's Proclamation of 1553 and burned.

Worcester. Antiquarian Society (founded by Isaiah Thomas). Large collection of American Bibles.

New York. Auburn. Auburn Seminary.

New York City. Lenox Library, large collection comprising many from the American Bible Society.

General Theological Seminary, a large collection.
Union Seminary.
New Jersey. Madison. Drew University Library.
Pennsylvania. Philadelphia. Episcopal Seminary.
Ohio. Cincinnati Public Library.
Illinois. Chicago. Newberry Library.
University of Chicago Library.
Kansas. Baldwin. Baker University, large collection.
California. Henry Huntington Library, San Marino (large collection).
Canada. Toronto. Victoria College.

Many colleges have one or two rare English Bibles, such as Amherst, Mount Holyoke, Rutgers, and the University of Pennsylvania. Others are in the possession of churches or individuals. The *Vinegar Bible,* for example, may be seen in St. John's Church, Portsmouth, N. H., Christ Church, Boston, and Christ Church, Philadelphia.

The edition of the *Breeches Bible,* which also contains the mistake of "Jesus Church," belongs to Mr. Joseph Skinner of South Hadley, Mass., and a first edition of the *Isaiah Thomas Bible,* bound in sheepskin, belongs to Mr. Charles Chapin of Springfield, Mass.

The original manuscript of *Thomson's Bible* may be seen at Allegheny College.

APPENDIX IV

A. Comparative Translations in the New Testament

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Wyclifite

in preiyinge uyle ye speke moche as hethen men don . . . thus ye schulen praye, Oure fadir that art in heuenes halowid be thi name, thi Kyngdom come to. be thi wille don in erthe as in heuene. geue to vs oure dettis as we forgeuen to oure dettoris. lede us not in to temptacioun; but delyuer us from yuel amen.

Tyndale (*Revised* 1534)

And when ye praye bable not moche as the hethen do . . . After this manner therfor praye ye. Oure father which arte in heven, halowed be thy name. Let thy kyngdome come. Thy wyll be fulfilled as well in erth as it ys in heven. Geve vs this daye oure dayly breede. And forgeve oure treaspases, even as we forgeve our treaspacers. Leade vs not into temptacion, but delyvre vs from yvell. For thyne is the Kyngedome and the power and the glorye for ever. Amen.

The Great Bible, 1539 (Coverdale's translation)

But when ye praye bable not moche, as the hethen do. . . . After this maner therfore praye ye.

Oure father which art in heaven, halowed by thy name. Let thy Kingdome come. Thy will be fulfilled, as well in erth, as it is a heuen. Geue vs this daye oure dayle bred. And forgeue oure dettes as we forgeue oure detters. And leade vs not into temptation; but delyuer vs from euyll. For thyne is the kyngdom and the power, and the gloyre for euer. Amen.

Geneva

Also when ye pray, bable not much as the heathen do . . . After this manner therfore pray ye, Our father which art in heauen, halowed be thy name. Let thy kingdome come. Thy wil be done euen in earth, as it is in heauen. Geue vs thys day our dayle bread and forgeue vs our debtes, euen as we forgiue our debters. And lead vs not into tentation, but deliuer vs from euil. For thyne is the kingdome, and the power, and the glorie for ever, Amen.

Rheims

But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen . . . Thus therefore shal you pray. OUR FATHER which art in heauen, sanctified be thy name. Let thy Kingdom come. Thy wil be done, as in heauen, in earth also. Giue vs to day our supersubstantial bread. And forgiue vs our dettes, as we also forgiue our detters. And leade vs not into tentation, But deliuer vs from euil. Amen.

Authorized Version

But when ye pray, use not vain repititions, as the heathen do. . . . .

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Revised Version

And in praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do. . . . After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Twentieth Century

When praying do not say the same words over and over again as is done by the heathen. . . . Pray in this way—
"Our heavenly Father,
May thy Name be held holy,
thy Kingdom come,
and thy will be done—
on earth, as in heaven.
Give us today
our bread for the day before us;
And forgive us our debts,
as we, too, have forgiven our debtors;
And do not take us into temptation,
but rescue us from Evil."

Weymouth

When praying, do not use needless repetitions as heathens do. . . . In this manner therefore pray: "Our Father who art in Heaven, may thy name be kept holy; let Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth; give us today our bread for the day; and forgive us our shortcomings, as we also have forgiven those who have failed in their duty towards us; and bring us not into temptation, but rescue us from the Evil one."

Moffatt

Do not pray by idle rote like pagans. . . . Let this be how you pray:
"our Father in heaven,
thy name be revered,
thy Reign begin,
thy will be done
on earth as in heaven!
give us today our bread
for the morrow,
and forgive us our debts
as we ourselves have forgiven our debtors,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil."

Goodspeed

When you pray do not repeat empty phrases as the heathen do. . . . This, therefore, is the way you are to pray:
"Our Father in heaven,
Your name be revered!
Your kingdom come!
Your will be done on earth as it is done in heaven!
Give us today bread for the day,
And forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven our debtors.
And do not subject us to temptation,
But save us from the evil one."

The Riverside

When praying do not keep repeating, as the Gentiles do. . . .
Pray in this way:

"Our Father in heaven,
Thy name be kept holy,
Thy Kingdom come;
Thy will prevail;
As in heaven, so on earth.

Our bread for the coming day
Give us to-day;
And forgive us our failures
As we forgive those who fail toward us;
And bring us not into trial,
But save us from evil."

I CORINTHIANS 13

Wyclifite

If I speke with tungis of men and of aungels, and I haue not charite, I am made as bras sownynge or a cymbal tinkynge . . .

Charite is pacient, it is benynge, charite enuyeth not, it doth not wickidli it is not blowun it is not coueitous, it seketh not tho thingis that ben his owne, it is not stired to wraththe, it thenketh not yuel, it ioieth not on wickednesse, but it ioieth

to gidre to truthe, it suffrith alle thingis: it bileueth alle thingis, it hopith alle thingis it susteyneth alle thingis, charite fallith neuer doun, whether profecies schulen be voided, ether langagis schulen ceese: ether science schal be destried.

Tyndale

Though I spake with the tonges of men and angels, and yet had no loue, I were even as soundinge brasse: or as a tynklynge Cymball . . . Loue suffreth longe, and is corteous. Loue envieth not. Loue doth not frowardly, swelleth not dealeth not dishonestly, seketh not her awne, is not provoked to anger, thynketh not evyll, reioyseth in the trueth, suffreth all thynge, beleveth all thynges, hopeth all thynges, endureth all thynges, Though that prophesyinge fayle, other tongues shall cease, or knowledge vanyshe awaye, yet love falleth never awaye.

Coverdale

Almost exactly the same as Tyndale.

Geneva

Thogh I spake with the tonges of men and Angels, and haue not loue, I am even as sounding brasse, or as a tynkling cymbal . . .

Loue suffreth long, is courteous: loue enuieth not: loue doth not boast it selfe, swelleth not, Disdaineth nothing as vnbeseeming, seketh not her owne things, is not prouoked to anger, thinketh not euil. Reioyseth not in iniquitie but reioyseth in the trueth, Suffreth all thinges, beleueth all thinges, hopeth all thinges, endureth all thinges. Loue doth neuer fall away, thogh that both propheciinges shalbe abolished, and tongues shall cease, and learning shal vanishe away.

Rheims

If I speake vvith the tonges of men and of Angels, and have not charitie: I am become as sounding brasse, or a tinkling cymbal . . .

Charitie is patient, is benigne: Charitie enuieth not, dealeth not peruersely: is not puffed vp, is not ambitious, seeketh not her ovvne, is not prouked to anger, thinketh not euil; reioyceth

not vpon iniquitie, but reiouceth with the truth: suffereth al things, beleeueth al things, hopeth al things, beareth al things. Charitie neuer falleth avvay: vvether prophecies shal be made voide, or tonges shal cease, or knovvledge shal be destroied.

Authorized Version

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal . . . Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

Revised Version

If I speak with tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal . . . Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away.

Twentieth Century

If I speak in the "tongues" of men—aye, and of angels, too —but am without Love, I have become mere echoing brass, or a clanging cymbal! . . . Love is long-suffering and kind. Love is never envious, never boastful, never conceited, never behaves unbecomingly. She is not self-seeking, not easily provoked nor does she reckon up her wrongs. She has no sympathy with deceit, but has full sympathy with truth. She is proof against all things, always trustful, always hopeful, always

patient. Love never dies. Are there "prophetic" gifts?—they will be cast aside. Are there "tongues"?—they will cease. Is there knowledge?—it will be cast aside.

Weymouth

If I can speak all the languages of men and of angels, but am destitute of Love, I have but become a loud-sounding trumpet or a clanging cymbal . . . Love is patient and kind. Love knows neither envy nor jealousy. Love is not forward and self-assertive, nor boastful and conceited. She does not behave unbecomingly, nor seek to aggrandize herself, nor blaze out in passionate anger, nor brood over wrongs. She finds no pleasure in injustice done to others, but joyfully sides with the truth. She knows how to be silent; she is full of trust, full of hope, full of patient endurance. Love never fails: but if there are prophecies they will be done away with; if there are languages, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be brought to an end.

Moffatt

I may speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but if I have not love,

I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal . . .

Love is very patient, very kind. Love knows no jealousy; love makes no parade, gives itself no airs, is never rude, never selfish, never irritated, never resentful; love is never glad when others go wrong, love is gladdened by goodness, always slow to expose, always eager to believe the best, always hopeful, always patient. Love never disappears. As for prophecying it will be superseded; as for "tongues," they will cease; as for knowledge, it will be superseded.

Goodspeed

If I can speak the languages of men and even of angels, but have no love, I am only a noisy gong or a clashing cymbal . . .

Love is patient and kind. Love is not envious or boastful. It does not put on airs. It is not rude. It does not insist on its rights. It does not become angry. It is not resentful. It is not happy over injustice, it is only happy with truth. It will bear anything, believe anything, hope for anything, endure anything.

Love will never die out. If there is inspired preaching, it will pass away. If there is ecstatic speaking it will cease. If there is knowledge it will pass away.

The Riverside

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. . . . Love is long-suffering, love is kind, is not jealous, love does not boast, is not conceited, does not behave unbecomingly, does not seek her own interest, is not irritable, does not count up her wrongs, does not rejoice in wickedness, but rejoices with the truth, excuses all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails; but if there are prophetic powers, they will become useless; if there are tongues they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will become useless.

Comparative Passages in the Old Testament

Isaiah 1: 18

Moffatt

Come, let me put it thus,
the Eternal argues:
scarlet your sins may be,
but they can become white as snow,
they may be red as crimson,
and yet turn white as wool.

American Translation

"Come now, and let us reason together,"
Says the Lord:
"If your sins be like scarlet,
Can they become white as snow?
If they be red like crimson,
Can they become as wool?"

Authorized Version

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool.

Revised Version

Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

ISAIAH 5: 14

Moffatt

So the underworld gapes greedily,
opening its jaws ever so wide,
And down go Sion's pomp and throng,
down go all her madding crowd.

American Translation

Therefore Sheol has enlarged her appetite,
And opens her mouth without limit;
And down go the rank and the rabble of Zion,
And all who rejoice in her.

Authorized Version

Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.

Revised Version

Therefore Sheol hath enlarged its desire, and opened its mouth without measure; and their glory and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth among them, descend *into it.*

JEREMIAH 10: 17, 18

Moffatt

Pick up your bundle to depart,
O city besieged!
For here is what the Eternal says: This time I am going to eject the inhabitants of the country and harry them until they pay the penalty.

American Translation

Pick up your baggage from the land,
You who sit under siege!
For thus says the Lord:
Behold! I am slinging out the inhabitants of the land
At a single shot;
And will put them to sore distress,
So that they may pay for their guilt.

Authorized Version

Gather up thy wares out of the land, O inhabitant of the fortress.

For thus saith the Lord, Behold I will sling out the inhabitants of the land at this once, and will distress them that they may find *it so.*

Revised Version

Gather up thy wares out of the land, O thou that abidest in the siege. For thus saith Jehovah, Behold, I will sling out the inhabitants of the land at this time, and will distress them, that they may feel *it.*

ECCLESIASTES 10: 18

Moffatt

Sloth makes the rafters sink:
when hands are slack the roof will leak.

American Translation

Because of sloth the woodwork sinks,
And because of laziness the house leaks.

Authorized Version

By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.

Revised Version

By slothfulness the roof sinketh in; and through idleness of the hands the house leaketh.

SOME INTERESTING COMPARISONS

Wyclif used *fold* in John 10:16. Tyndale translated the word correctly *flock*. The Great Bible followed Wyclif and all the others including the Authorized until the revisers went back to Tyndale.

Tyndale translated Genesis 39:2, "And the Lord was with Joseph and he was a lucky fellow." Can any modern translator be more colloquial?

Coverdale rendered Judges 15:19, "Then God opened a gome tooth in the cheke bone so the water went out."

The Rheims New Testament makes Jesus say in Luke 22:18, "I will not drink of the generation of the vine" and in Philippians 2:7 the rendering is, "But he exinanited himself."

In Matthew 7:14 Wyclif has the familiar rendering, "How streit is the gate and narrowe the weye that leadeth to lyfe, and there ben fewe that fyndeth it." And in Matthew 16:22, "Petre took hym, and began to blame hym, and saide, Fer be it fro thee, Lord, this thing shall not be to thee," and in John 4:23, "But the our cometh, and now it is, whanne worschipers schulen worschipe the fader in spirit and treuthe."

These renderings are close to the King James Version. Such words as *beam* and *mote* were retained. The feudal conditions of the times are reflected in Wyclif's translation of II Timothy 2:4, "No man that holdeth knighthood to God inwlappith himselfe."

The A. V. changes Wyclif's *shamefast* to *shamefacedness* and *sothesaw to proverb*.

Following is the way Mark 1:32 came down from the Vulgate as far as the Authorized Version:

Latin: Vespere autem facto.

Wyclif: Forsothe the euenynge maad.

Purvey: But whanne the euentide was come.

A. V.: And at even when the sun was set.

The Authorized Version follows Tyndale in the Beatitudes: "And he opened his mouth, and taught them sayinge:

Blessed are the poore in sprete: for theirs is the Kyngdome of heven," and so on.

Following is Coverdale's rendering of Psalm 23.

"The Lorde is my shepherde, I can want nothinge.
He fedeth me in a greene pasture and ledeth me to a fresh water."

Goodspeed uses *foul spirits* for *demons*.
Moffatt uses *The Eternal* for *God* in the Old Testament.

APPENDIX V

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*Especially recommended.

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